



GENIUS DOCTOR: BLACK BELLY MISS

BOOK 03

North Night

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

Genius Doctor: Black Belly Miss

(絕世神醫：腹黑大小姐)

by

North Night

(夜北)

Synopsis

She was a peerless genius in the 24th Century – all she needed was a silver needle and she could practically bring anyone back from the dead.

After an explosion, she crossed over into a strange world; everyone calls her “Miss.” The previous “Miss” before had no contractual spirit, was weak and incompetent, and even the fiancé comes over with a new love and bullies her?

Now that she has taken over, who dares to act so presumptuously around her? With needles in hand, the world is for her to own! Wherever she goes, miracles follow! However, she saved a pest. What was she thinking when she saved that man. His stunning demeanor and impeccable face is a huge contrast to his cruel actions. He tries all ways to win her over.

This is an interesting cross over story with some magic, romance and a black bellied miss as the main character.

Copyright

All rights reserved.

English Translation by Misty Cloud Translations @ [Misty Cloud Translations](#)

ePub conversion by Lisa Hayes @ [Hasseno Blog](#)

This is a free eBook. You are free to give it away (in unmodified form) to whomever you wish.

No part of this eBook may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the author.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Chapter 401: “Spirit Healer (1)”

While everyone’s jaws were all still on the floor, Jun Wu Xie had nevertheless remained completely unaffected. Fan Jin had come just to tell her to report to the Spirit Healer faculty early the next morning. Fan Jin was a disciple of the Beast Spirit faculty and did not know too much about the Spirit Healer faculty though.

Jun Wu Xie listened quietly and parted ways with Fan Jin thereafter.

However, in just one night, the name Jun Xie spread throughout the Zephyr Academy and reached the ears of everyone.

It was due to the fact that he was the only disciple accepted into the Spirit Healer faculty and that fact lent a brilliant halo to shine, attracting much curiosity and a larger part of stares of disdain due to the wicked rumours swirling all over the place.

Attracting the eyes of everyone wasn’t always a good thing and as Jun Wu Xie made her way back to the dorms, the stares that came from all directions were mostly unfriendly and filled with malice.

Early the next morning, Jun Wu Xie went to report at the Spirit Healer faculty.

The Spirit Healer faculty might have very few people in there, but the space of the campus was extremely spacious, and was in no way inferior to the other two faculties. It was obvious that the emphasis the academy placed on the Spirit Healer faculty was as just as important as the other two more crowded faculties.

Within the huge towering faculty building, a few lone figures could be seen scattered throughout. They were dressed in the Zephyr Academy’s uniform and they wore a jade emblem upon their chests.

And just as she reached the entrance, Jun Wu Xie met someone she knew.

He was speaking with another disciple when Yin Yan saw the tiny figure enter. He raised his head and when Jun Wu Xie came into his vision, his pale face suddenly darkened. He had not gone back to the dorm last night as he had been busy in the Spirit Healer faculty. He had not expected himself to actually see Jun Xie the very next morning!

“What are you doing coming here to the Spirit Healer faculty?” Yin Yan asked with a deeply furrowed brow.

Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow and said curtly: “Reporting.”

Yin Yan’s face changed to one of shock and before he could say anything, Jun Wu Xie had already continued on her way and was entering the Spirit Healer faculty’s building. The other disciple whom Yin Yan was speaking to saw Yin Yan’s dark face before turning to stare after Jun Wu Xie’s diminishing back while he said: “You know him?”

“Who?”

“Jun Xie. The kid who just passed us. You were busy here at the faculty the whole night and you must not have heard that the kid’s first day here at the Zephyr Academy had barely ended when his name became famous throughout the whole academy.”

“What is that supposed to mean?” Yin Yan asked, puzzled.

“Our Spirit Healer faculty, had only one disciple admitted this year. It was decided by Master himself and that person was named Jun Xie.”

Yin Yan’s eyes widened alarmingly. He could not believe his own ears!

“What did you say ! ? That brat is a disciple of the Spirit Healer faculty?”

“That’s right..... We are fellow disciples with him from today onwards.” The other youth was oblivious to the struggle that surged within Yin Yan’s eyes.

Yin Yan clenched his jaw in anger and walked off towards the faculty's building.

Senior Ning's guess had been right after all. The fact that Fan Jin would readily mentor the kid was not as simple as things seemed.

As the thoughts raced through his mind, Yin Yan's mouth curled up into a malicious smile. It was little wonder now that Fan Jin would so eagerly accept his mentorship of Jun Xie. He must have known from the start that the tiny brat would be directed accepted into the Spirit Healer faculty. A potential candidate to become a full fledged Spirit Healer..... Fan Jin had really picked well!

But.....

You do not become a Spirit Healer that easily.

He would really like to see, just how good Fan Jin's choice was!

A creepy chill crept into Yin Yan's eyes and when his eyes caught sight of the back of the tiny figure making his way up the steps, the chilly malice within his eyes continued to rage and swirl unchecked.

Chapter 402: “Spirit Healer (2)”

Jun Wu Xie was not aware that a venomous snake had his eyes set on her. Her eyes were instead taking in all the sights before her within the Spirit Healer Academy, and committing them to memory.

She had not come to the Zephyr Academy with the intention to learn anything from them, and neither was she interested in fighting over anything with anyone here. If she had not found the Spirit Healing technique to be useful, she might have chosen to waste her time away in the Beast Spirit faculty while waiting for the arrival of Qiao Chu and the others.

It was in fact this very nonchalance and devil may care attitude that, just after a single day after being admitted, made her infamous throughout the academy, and that was something Jun Wu Xie had not expected.

The study of Spirit Healing mainly took place within the faculty's building. The building was split into five levels and Jun Wu Xie followed the instructions given to her last night and went straight up to the top level, towards Gu Li Sheng's office.

“Gotten used to it yet?” Gu Li Sheng asked, having waited for quite a time. He was seated behind his desk and was smiling as he looked at Jun Wu Xie.

Jun Wu Xie nodded.

Used to it? She had not met with anything that would interfere with her so far.

In the past, no matter where she went, it had not made much of a difference to her. But with the Jun father and son with her, besides the Lin Palace, every other place felt the same.

“Did asking you to join the Spirit Healing faculty make you feel aggrieved in any way?” Gu Li Sheng asked with a smile.

Jun Wu Xie considered it a moment before she replied: “Spirit Healing will be useful to me.”

“Hahaha.” Gu Li Sheng laughed aloud, unable to hold it in. His question had been meant to tease the boy a little and he had not expected to get such a serious reply from him.

Feelings, seemed to not matter much to the boy, and hence, he wouldn’t be feeling aggrieved, would he?

The Spirit Healer faculty had just been seen as nothing more as a place that was of use to the boy and Gu Li Sheng was instead the one feeling a tad bit aggrieved.

“Since it would be useful to you, learn it well. Tell me whatever you know about Spirit Healing for now.” Gu Li Sheng asked with his arms crossed over his chest, looking at Jun Wu Xie stoically. This was Gu Li Sheng’s first time, over the many years since the founding of Spirit Healing, that he had broken the mold and accepted a disciple before enrollment was even completed and the boy was also the only disciple he had accepted this year. The Zephyr Academy’s headmaster and the vice headmaster had both spoken to him about the matter yesterday separately, but that still had not made him change his mind.

He would rather place value on one excellent disciple over many who might still never ever make the mark.

Jun Xie stared at the expectant Gu Li Sheng who was waiting for him to embark on a lengthy debate and calmly replied with a single word: “Nothing.”

“.....” Gu Li Sheng’s smile froze on his face. He was rather certain he must have heard wrong.

“Not..... a tiny weeny bit?” Gu Li Sheng looked at Jun Wu Xie with a flabbergasted look. His answer was really..... exceptionally refreshing to hear!

Among all the disciples who have come to the Zephyr Academy,

was there a single one who knew not a single thing about Spirit Healers? Which rock had this boy sprouted out from?

Jun Wu Xie nodded, her face in all seriousness.

Gu Li Sheng buried his head into his hands, highly suspicious that there was something wrong with his eyes.

“Alright.” Gu Li Sheng finally calmed himself down sufficiently to say. He summoned every ounce of his control to maintain his facade of an amicable and graceful teacher to slowly place a book right before Jun Wu Xie.

“The basics of Spirit Healing is all written in there. You will find it useful.”

Jun Wu Xie stretched her hand over and lowered her head to start reading as the pages flipped quickly.

The book was not thick and Jun Wu Xie had flipped through it a few times. She memorized everything in there and subsequently placed the book back on the table.

Gu Li Sheng observed Jun Xie as he flipped through the book a few times quickly and had then just placed the book back on the table. Suddenly, he found that his mind could not process a proper response to Jun Xie’s actions.

He stared at the book on the table, and then he stared at Jun Wu Xie.

Jun Wu Xie only stared back at him, his face expressionless.

Chapter 403: “Spirit Healer (3)”

“I meant it for you to bring it back to slowly go through it.” Gu Li Sheng explained.

“I’ve finished it.”

“What?” Gu Li Sheng stared at Jun Wu Xie in incredulity.

Jun Wu Xie repeated herself: “I’ve finished it.”

The book was thinner than the Zephyr Academy’s rule book and memorizing it was a relatively easy task for her.

“.....” Gu Li Sheng continued to keep his eyes on Jun Wu Xie and it only after a long moment that he asked: “Finished? Then recite to me the second paragraph on page eight if you would.”

Jun Wu Xie cast a glance at Gu Li Sheng and finally spoke slowly and clearly. She recited the passage word for word, without a single error, every word pronounced crystalline clear.....

Gu Li Sheng’s expression looked a little terrified at that moment.

He still harboured a sliver of doubt and he proceeded to put a few more books before Jun Xie and said: “Look through these.”

Jun Wu Xie shot another glance at Gu Li Sheng but had surrendered to his whim and lowered her head over the books once more, going through all of them once.

Without waiting for Gu Li Sheng to ask, Jun Wu Xie chose a few passages from the books herself and recite them out to him.

Thereafter.....

Gu Li Sheng picked the books up and put them all back into the shelf.

He swore to himself, that he would never show those books to another disciple ever again!

How embarrassing!

In the beginning, just to commit these few books to memory, he had laboured over them for almost half a year. He would never have thought that a disciple he had carelessly decided to pick up had actually used less than the time an incense stick burned out to fully memorise the whole row of books on his shelf.....

He suddenly felt embarrassed of himself.....

“Cough..... Memorising texts really isn’t too difficult. You have a rather good memory. But what’s more important..... would be to understand them.” Gu Li Sheng had never been in such an embarrassing situation before his disciples. He had always maintained his image of a mysterious and graceful teacher before their eyes and he felt that he needed to recover a little of his diminished pride.

Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow and said: “Spirit Healing is based on a person’s innate spiritual power and it converts that spiritual power to fill up any deficiencies suffered by the spirit. But the method of conversion is not sustainable. The amount of spiritual power consumed does not match up to the amount of healing the spirit receives. The excessive loss of the spiritual power could only mean that the method employed is incorrect.”

Those books had recorded in detail everything about Spirit Healing and all of its contents might seem extremely difficult to comprehend, but to Jun Wu Xie, who even understood genetic chains most proficiently and had dominated in that field of Medicine, this concept of energy transfer was not too complicated for her to grasp fully. As long as she was provided with a solid basis to build from, she would be able to carry out unlimited conclusion from her inference from that basis.

From her perspective, Spirit Healing was indeed a most daring innovative use of one’s spiritual power, but the healing technique exhausted too much and gained too little in comparison.

It was of definite use, but it was in dire need of more research and

many improvements to be made to it.

And those few books had cleared up a lot of doubts that Jun Wu Xie held, and given her fresh insights.

She had gathered from the books that a spiritual body could be converted into a kind of energy and put to use. When the little black cat had devoured the Golden Lion, it could be deemed as a form of the devouring of energy, and that energy had undergone a transformation through the black beast's spirit and the Golden Lion's spirit had in turn become a kind of nourishment, facilitating a sudden growth spurt in the black beast's power.

As for Spirit Healing, it converts a person's own spiritual power into a form of spiritual energy. Although it was not as pure as the energy from devouring an actual ring spirit, it could nevertheless achieve similar results under certain specific conditions.

Spirit Healing itself was a mystery to all other people, but to Jun Wu Xie, after having read through all those books, it suddenly dawned on her.....

All of this..... didn't seem all that complicated afterall.

She had over complicated her thoughts on the spiritual aspects of this world and had shackled the boundaries of her own line of thoughts on it.

Jun Wu Xie was deeply immersed in her own thoughts and she spoke her own doubts and ideas out aloud on the inadequacies and flaws on Gu Li Sheng's Spirit Healing, and even spoke out on her own ideas on the areas to improve on.

As Jun Wu Xie was not even aware that her words were spoken out loud, she failed to notice that the Gu Li Sheng sitting directly opposite her, had his mouth wide open, seemingly unable to close it for a long while.

Chapter 404: “Spirit Healer (4)”

“Hold it! !” Gu Li Sheng was overwhelmed, his head swimming with terms like “energy”, “sequence”, “equivalent exchange” and many more terms he had never even heard of before. He found himself bathed in sweat and he stood up in a flurry interrupting Jun Wu Xie’s incessant monologue.

If he were to allow the kid to go on, he would begin to start having doubts of his very own Spirit Healing and think that he had gotten it all wrong.

“What is it?” Jun Wu Xie raised her head and looked at Gu Li Sheng. She did not usually speak much and only in instances within the sphere of academic speciality, would she show eagerness in engagement. And it was only through these professional terms and lingo that one would feel Jun Wu Xie was not as unapproachable as she seemed.

“I’m sorry, but I can’t..... understand what you are saying.” When those words came out through his lips, he felt strangely ashamed!

Just who was the Teacher here, and who was the disciple! ?

How did it turn out that the disciple he had just taken in spoke a whole bunch of gibberish that was beyond his understanding! ?

Jun Wu Xie’s expression was a little exasperated.

“Everything I said was about your Spirit Healing technique.”

Gu Li Sheng was feeling rather small under Jun Wu Xie’s “You founded it, how can you not understand” eyes, and his mind was still reeling from trying to make head or tail of what Jun Wu Xie had said.

A teacher’s dignity was smashed to smithereens right at that moment.

He was feeling rather sorry for himself at that moment.

Jun Wu Xie stared at Gu Li Sheng for a long while as Gu Li Sheng's face got more and more pale. The little black cat upon Jun Wu Xie's shoulder could not hold itself back anymore!

“Meow~”

[Mistress, please do not use the theories from your past life to explain your thoughts in this world, especially with something so profound like the conversion of energy.

It was only then that Jun Wu Xie realised a lot of what she had said were very much based on the knowledge foundation she acquired in her past life.

“What I meant was, that the Spirit Healing technique has a lot more room for improvements.” Jun Wu Xie put her words in the simplest terms she could in a broad summary of her opinion.

But her short and simple summary did not make Gu Li Sheng's face look any better, but made him turn a paler shade instead.

“You..... you know how to improve on it?” Gu Li Sheng asked, with a twitch at the corner of his mouth.

The Spirit Healing technique had its inadequacies but Gu Li Sheng had not been able to determine how he could improve the technique in his years of research on his own. All the other disciples he had had always only followed his instructions in their training and none of them had questioned the technique.

He had never thought that small built boy, Jun Xie, who had only first learnt about Spirit Healing for barely the time used for a stick of incense to burn, could actually spot the deficiencies within the technique.

Jun Wu Xie furrowed her brows and thought about it a moment before she said: “I can give it a try.”

“Really?” Gu Li Sheng looked doubtfully at Jun Wu Xie.

“Yes.”

Gu Li Sheng got up grandly from his chair and circled Jun Wu Xie a few times, assessing the tiny figure before him all over.

“Kid, you want to take a gamble?”

“On?” Jun Wu Xie asked.

“Since you already understand everything about the Spirit Healing technique, and feel that there are areas for improvements, I feel that there is nothing you can learn from being here. Rather than having you waste your time here in the Spirit Healer faculty, shouldn't you use the time on other areas, and try to perfect the Spirit Healing technique instead?” The idea had suddenly just appeared in Gu Li Sheng's head. He knew he should not have to pin all his hopes on Jun Xie, but in regards to Spirit Healing, he had exhausted all his ideas and had absolutely no idea what he could do to further improve it.

Since Jun Xie was able to spot the inadequacies in the technique so quickly, maybe.....

He might very well bring about a miracle.

Jun Wu Xie looked at Gu Li Sheng. The mirth seen earlier in Gu Li Sheng's eyes had disappeared and he was staring at Jun Wu Xie seriously. She remained silent a moment, before she nodded slowly.

Chapter 405: “Spirit Healer (5)”

Gu Li Sheng beamed widely, the first time he had seen the little kid, he had found the kid to be very interesting. At such an obvious young age, and already broken through to the orange level. But what piqued his interest was that the kid’s ring spirit was extremely weak, and that weakness was not inborn, but was rather caused by grave injuries.

It must be known, to even inflict grave injuries on a ring spirit to such an extent, that itself would be a difficult task.

He was curious as to what had happened to the kid and decided to bring him into the Spirit Healer faculty. But he had not expected to have brought in such a shocking revelation for himself.

“Don’t agree to it all just yet. I am not finished. Not keeping you within the Spirit Healer faculty is meant to hide the fact that you would be improving on the Spirit Healing technique from anyone. You must realise how tempting and alluring Spirit Healing is to people and if anyone were to know that you are researching on it in secret, it might bring uninvited trouble and put your own life at risk. But if I drive you out of the Spirit Healer faculty and personally request for the Headmaster to allow you to remain within the Zephyr Academy, the fact remains that no matter which other faculty you are transferred to, the treatment you will receive from everyone else, will not be easy to handle.” Gu Li Sheng said as he narrowed his eye. Due to the high profile and irregular way Jun Wu Xie was accepted into the Spirit Healer faculty, Jun Xie had inadvertently become an infamous “celebrity” within the Zephyr Academy. If Jun Xie was expelled on the very first day, and shoved into the other faculties, all the hidden envy and jealousy of the other youths would be sure to erupt into an overwhelming wave, and putting Jun Wu Xie in the middle of it.

“Is that related to the Spirit Healing technique?” Jun Wu Xie asked, looking in all seriousness at Gu Li Sheng.

Gu Li Sheng did not know how to reply to such a question.

“I only need to know, what I want to do.” Jun Wu Xie said calmly. As to how unrelated people act or say, was not of a concern to her. What mattered was as long as she achieved her aims.

Gu Li Sheng suddenly laughed out loud. He looked at Jun Wu Xie with tears brought by laughter and said: “You are truly the most interesting little kid I have ever come across.”

The wisdom, the personality..... There won't be another one like this under the skies.

Who in the world could upon first entering the academy be able to face up to their Teacher and speak so assuredly, and pointing out the inadequacies of the teachings so indifferently, with a face calm like still water throughout.

Jun Wu Xie did not give any response to that.

“Since you do not think that that would be any issue for you, I will hereby leave it in your good hands. If at any time you need any help, you can come to me anytime.” Gu Li Sheng sighed upon saying that, feeling slightly heavy of heart that he was handing over such a complicated task that would inadvertently bring much ridicule and humiliation to the young boy.

Jun Wu Xie did not reject Gu Li Sheng's well intentioned offer, but if truth were to be spoken, to Jun Wu Xie, Gu Li Sheng had..... rendered himself of not too much use..... after he gave Jun Wu Xie all those books to read.

“Cough..... I will be leaving to go speak with the Headmaster, would you want to stay here to have a look around or.....” Gu Li Sheng could no longer keep up his image of a graceful teacher before Jun Wu Xie, the kid obviously dominated over him in this meeting.

“All these books, can I read them?” Jun Wu Xie pointed at Gu Li Sheng's overflowing shelves of books.

Gu Li Sheng's mouth twitched but nevertheless squeezed out a: "Go ahead."

Jun Wu Xie proceeded to take out some books from the shelf and flipped through them quickly while Gu Li Sheng made his way over to the Headmaster's to do some hard explaining on his decision to "expel" Jun Xie out of the Spirit Healer faculty.

Thinking of the fact that he was about to "drive out" such a prodigious disciple with his own hands, Gu Li Sheng's heart was bleeding. But he had to do it as it would shield the boy from uninvited prying noses on the task at hand.

For such a young boy, even if he were to manage to fully grasp the Spirit Healing technique that even Gu Li Sheng had been unable to, that would only spell disaster and bring undesired attention to him.

Chapter 406: “Unexpected Twist (1)”

Yin Yan was feeling uneasy as he paced within the faculty building. The uneasiness had started after Jun Wu Xie entered Gu Li Sheng’s office. Half an incense stick’s time passed and the two still had not appeared which only intensified Yin Yan’s worries.

That fact that Jun Xie had caused Gu Li Sheng to make an exception to personally recruit the boy into the Spirit Healer faculty early during enrollment and to decide to take in just one disciple for the year made Yin Yan very nervous.

Just as Yin Yan was still pacing worriedly, the door to the office was suddenly pushed open and Yin Yan hid hurriedly in a corner.

He saw only Gu Li Sheng by himself, bursting out of the office and slamming his door shut with a loud bang.

Yin Yan frowned, from what he had observed when Gu Li Sheng left his office, he instinctively felt that things were not as bad as it seemed.

Gu Li Sheng had always been amicable to everyone, to both disciples of the Spirit Healer faculty and to disciples from the other faculties. He was always good natured and steady, never seen to have lost his cool. Unlike today, when he had stepped out of his office in a fluster and walked off hurriedly.

“Did that brat Jun Xie cause Master to be so flustered?” Yin Yan whispered softly to himself.

Very soon, Yin Yan got the answer to his query.

It had been less than two hours before Gu Li Sheng hurried back. He went straight into his office and moments later, Jun Xie walked out through the door. And Yin Yan noticed one fine detail. When Jun Xie came out of the office, the jade badge that was hanging upon his chest had been removed. The jade badge that proved that one was from the Spirit Healer faculty.

His heart leapt when he spotted that point.

After Jun Wu Xie came out the office, she had immediately walked out of the Spirit Healer faculty, never once looking back.

The series of actions by Jun Xie that Yin Yan observed from the shadows, told Yin Yan that Jun Xie had been expelled from the Spirit Healer faculty! !

Within just a short day, news of Jun Xie being expelled from the Spirit Healer faculty spread quickly throughout the Zephyr Academy.

If it had been anyone else, it might not have attracted so much attention, but Jun Xie had already caused such a big commotion all the way from his enrollment to his first day at the academy. By now, not a single person within the Zephyr Academy had not heard of the name, Jun Xie.

He was assumed to have been admitted into the academy in glory and the future held endless possibilities for him. A boy so blessed with fortune was admitted into the Spirit Healer faculty but had unexpectedly been expelled from the faculty just hours after he had first stepped in there! His fall came so quickly and unexpectedly and that put everyone in great shock!

The Spirit Healer faculty had expelled unsuitable disciples through their doors before, but that was after a whole school year's observation before it was decided. But in Jun Xie's case, he had just gone to the Spirit Healer faculty barely hours into his first day there when he was unceremoniously driven out! That was surely the first time the Spirit Healer faculty had done that!

The news spread swiftly, like wildfire in a dry field. The youths who had been deeply envious and jealous of Jun Xie, had upon hearing the news, rejoiced at Jun Xie's downfall.

The endlessly fortunate brat that gained the hatred of everyone just the day before, had now become the biggest joke in the

academy!

It had taken only a blink of the eye for Jun Xie to fall facedown into the mud from her envied position high in the clouds!

In just one day, Jun Xie had, from being the object of everyone's envy, suddenly turned into the butt of everyone's joke.

All of this, was unknown to Jun Wu Xie. After she had left the Spirit Healer faculty grounds, Jun Wu Xie had returned to the dormitory. It was the time when everyone else were engaged with their training and the whole dormitory was empty, with her being the only person there.

As she sat down at the side of her bed, Jun Wu Xie pulled out a jade badge carved into the brand of the Beast Spirit faculty.

It was given to her by Gu Li Sheng himself, before she left that office.

Chapter 407: “Unexpected Twist (2)”

The jade emblems for the various faculties were all different. The Beast Spirit faculty used green jade, while the Weapon Spirit faculty used black jade and the Spirit Healer faculty used white jade.

The piece of jade within Jun Wu Xie’s hand was green jade and it symbolised that she belonged to the Beast Spirit faculty.

The new disciples of the Beast Spirit faculty had already left to report at their faculty building earlier today and Jun Wu Xie, the halfway hurriedly admitted disciple was however in no hurry to get there.

Her ring spirit was plant based and studies that taught her about beast or weapon spirits did not matter to her. The only thing she wanted to learn was how to make use of the spiritual power within her.

It was that realisation that made Jun Wu Xie decide not to make her way to go join the Beast Spirit faculty campus immediately, that made her miss witnessing the way her reputation was being torn and shredded apart by the “newsflash” spreading throughout the whole academy.

It was till mid afternoon, when the disciples were all making their way to lunch that Jun Wu Xie walked into the dining hall. Her appearance attracted many stares to turn her way. Stares filled with malevolence, disdain, and pity were all directed at her and they followed her as she moved. Jun Wu Xie carried the little black cat and was seemingly oblivious to the stares. She retrieved her food and sat down in a corner, bending her head down to eat. Not hearing, not seeing all that was going on around her.

“That is Jun Xie! ? The one that was kicked out on his first day?” Some of the youths who had never seen Jun Xie were craning their necks to take a good look at the tiny figure. They had not been

interested to see a genius, however much was said about him, but they were now deeply interested to join in flogging a cur that had fallen into water, and were anxious to see how he looked like.

“That’s the one. It was just his first day and he was kicked out. What a joke.” Another youth sneered.

“But, didn’t being kicked out of the Spirit Healer faculty also mean he has to leave the Zephyr Academy altogether? What is he doing still being here?”

“Who knows.”

The whole hall was filled with debates and guesses surrounding the new disciple on how he had fallen from being the fortune kid to become the forsaken kid within the span of just one day.

On the second level of the dining hall, Senior Ning looked down from the railing and stared at Jun Xie sitting alone by the corner, who was eating quietly without a sound, and her eyebrow raised in question.

“That is the boy that Fan Jin has his eye on?” Senior Ning narrowed her eyes as she shot a glance at Yin Yan at the side.

Yin Yan had ran at the first instance of realising that Jun Xie had been thrown out of the Spirit Healer faculty to Senior Ning to deliver the news into her hands. At that moment, the two of them were peering down from high above, enjoying the sight of seeing Jun Xie in a quandary.

“Yes.”

“He was really thrown out of the Spirit Healer faculty?” Senior Ning asked cautiously. “Being thrown out of the faculty on the first day of admittance. Nothing like this had ever happened before and Gu Li Sheng has always been gentle and amicable. He does not look like someone who is capable of bringing things to such an extreme.”

Yin Yan reassured hurriedly: “It is definitely true. After Jun Xie

left, I specially went up to Master to ask why the newly admitted fellow disciple had left just like that. Master had then told me that he did not belong to the Spirit Healer faculty and there was no reason for him to stay within the faculty grounds.”

Recalling Gu Li Sheng’s expression when he had said those words, Yin Yan still felt a smile coming onto his face.

“Oh? Is that so? I heard that the kid had already met Gu Li Sheng during the tests carried out upon her enrollment and Gu Li Sheng had shown great interest in him. He had even asked the kid in front of everyone there if he was interested in going to the Spirit Healer faculty. It was just a few days ago and Gu Li Sheng has changed his mind?” Senior Ning’s eyes were still narrowed and she still held some suspicions on the matter. All these happenings did not seem like what Gu Li Sheng would do.

Yin Yan said in objection: “Those were just casual words from a kind teacher, how can anyone take it seriously? It was Jun Xie, who had unashamedly assumed that he had gained Master’s favour and would be admitted into the Spirit Healer faculty that had created such a ruckus.”

“But didn’t Gu Li Sheng say that he had only selected one disciple this year? And that the disciple has been informed?” Senior Ning continued to ask.

Chapter 408: “Unexpected Twist (3)”

Yin Yan was at a loss for words, as he had not thought about that.

It was when the two of them were still talking when a commotion broke out in the dining hall from the first level.

A fair skinned youth was surrounded by a crowd as they entered the dining hall. It could be seen from his looks that he was still young in age, about fifteen to sixteen years.

“Zi Mu, after all these ruckus, it turned out that you were the disciple selected to go to the Spirit Healer faculty! ? You had even gone with us to the Beast Spirit faculty this morning. I was thinking we’ll be able to train together in future but who would have thought that you would be so heartless, dumping us there and suddenly going to the Spirit Healer faculty by yourself.” The crowd clustered around the youth crooned, and laughter broke out from the group.

The youth in the center was feeling a little embarrassed but he nevertheless stuck up his chin and a smile curled up the corners of his mouth, showing how pleased he was with himself.

“I had not known, that the slight brush of shoulders between Master and me was actually the sign that I had been selected by Master. That had really kicked up quite a ruckus.” Li Zi Mu shook his head in feigned remorse, but his eyes were filled with glee.

“You were not responsible for that ruckus, it was that imposter who did it.” A youth walking with the group insinuated as he pointed with his jaw into a corner where Jun Wu Xie sat alone. Seeing no reaction from Jun Xie, he raised his voice, making himself to be clearly heard throughout the dining hall.

“For those people who do not possess the capabilities, they should not harbour such unrealistic dreams. They had only been extremely lucky to have met Master Gu once during enrollment

and they had ridiculously thought they would be admitted into the Spirit Healer faculty! ? Those people should take a good look at themselves in the mirror and see how they look before being so self important. They had even shamelessly gone to the Spirit Healer faculty and got themselves thrown out by Master Gu. All that had caused Master Gu to have to make arrangements to retrieve Zi Mu back to the Spirit Healer faculty. Those people are really such a joke to mankind.”

The youth’s voice was loud, and everyone within the dining hall heard every word.

With those words, those disciples who had still been wondering why Jun Xie was driven out of the Spirit Healer faculty on his first day suddenly took what they heard to be the truth.

That must be true. Gu Li Sheng’s choice disciple for the Spirit Healer faculty had not been Jun Xie in the first place. It had actually been someone else, but Jun Xie had been pompous and self opinionated and assumed he had been the chosen one, and run to the Spirit Healer faculty to try to steal Li Zi Mu’s spot. Alas, the moment Gu Li Sheng set his eyes on Jun Xie, he saw that things had gone terribly wrong, and had immediately thrown Jun Xie out of the Spirit Healer faculty.

At that moment, everyone who had been eager just to watch Jun Xie squirm in his predicament suddenly felt hatred and disdain grow and fester in their hearts, thinking that a boy at such a young tender age was already so unscrupulous trying to fish in troubled waters, and that was just too shameful of him.

Many of them spat at Jun Xie in their hearts, cursing at his disgraceful traits and that he was not qualified to remain in the Zephyr Academy. They wished fervently that he would just pack up and leave immediately.

Li Zi Mu was reveling in all the attention and adoration thrown upon him. He had wanted to ask his companions to stop all that

praise for him but had suddenly decided against it when he saw the looks of idolization in their eyes.

If truth was to be told, things were not as what all the others had guessed. When Gu Li Sheng had asked for Li Zi Mu to see him, Gu Li Sheng had explicitly said that it had been his own mistake when he had provided the Teacher in charge of the lecture on the first night with an incorrect description of the selected disciple which had resulted in such a misunderstanding and that Jun Xie was innocent in all this.

But Li Zi Mu was the only one whom Gu Li Sheng had said that to and Li Zi Mu had been deeply jealous when the Teacher had announced that Jun Xie was the only disciple qualified to be admitted into the Spirit Healer faculty. Now that the fortunes had turned and the spotlight had turned onto him, he did not want to care whether Jun Xie was innocent. From what he saw, Jun Xie's current predicament was all due to his own lack of awareness of his own capabilities.

And it was with this same mentality that led Li Zi Mu in his narration of his side of the cooked up story to lending more spice to it, adding fuel to the fire.

Chapter 409: “Defamation (1)”

And those very words had pushed Jun Wu Xie right into the eye of the storm.

“Forget it, there is no need to harp further on it, I do not mind it in the least.” Li Zi Mu puffed up his chest to say generously, but the expression on his face did not show that he was sincere in wanting to appease the crowd.

“Zi Mu, you are too nice and generous, and that had almost allowed some sneaky person to steal your spot in the Spirit Healer faculty.” The youths around Li Zi Mu sang his praises loudly. They were envious of him, but they knew that gaining the inside track now with a future Spirit Healer would not hurt them in anyway.

Li Zi Mu’s personality was a lot more receptive to people and he got along rather well with his peers, the complete opposite of Jun Xie’s cold and unapproachable one. Even when people had wanted to try to get closer, their efforts had not been reciprocated.

“Sheesh, I would never have thought that a fellow disciple who enrolled together with us would do something like this. If my Master had not seeked me out, I would have just stayed on quietly in the Beast Spirit faculty with all my brothers.” Li Zi Mu continued with a heavy sigh.

Those words might have seemed to be spoken carelessly, but it made all the other disciples realise another point they had not considered.

If not for Gu Li Sheng’s “insistence” to right the wrong, wouldn’t Jun Wu Xie have grandly stolen Li Zi Mu’s well deserved opportunity from him right before everyone’s eyes! ? Most of the applicants who came to the Zephyr Academy had their eyes set on entering the Spirit Healer faculty, and if that rare opportunity was swiped by an imposter in their place, every single one of them would have gone mad with rage.

The group of exuberant youths felt their anger rise the more they thought about it and they thoroughly despised Jun Xie at that moment. Coupled with their intention to get on the good side of Li Zi Mu, their actions became more and more uninhibited.

“Zi Mu, you are being just too nice a guy, but we as your brothers cannot allow you to be bullied like this.” The youths looked at each other as those words were said and an idea formed before they walked towards the corner of the dining hall.

Jun Wu Xie was eating with her head lowered over her food when she suddenly felt people approaching. She looked up to see who it was. The table before her was suddenly overturned, spilling all the soup and drinks all over the floor, and the bowls and cutlery crashed loudly on to the ground.

“You are such a shameless brat to still be able to enjoy your food here! Don’t you know that after being thrown out by the Spirit Healer faculty, you no longer have the right to stay on in the Zephyr Academy?” A well built youth stepped a foot on the overturned table and used his tall stature to stare down at the tiny figure still seated on the chair, with an expressionless face.

Jun Wu Xie’s face had remained cold as she stared at the offending youth.

“Your despicable deeds have already spread to everyone’s ears. How can the Zephyr Academy ever accept such an incorrigible disciple? That would only bring down our name! You do not have the right to remain here, and before you get yourself out of the academy, you owe Li Zi Mu here an apology.” Several youths had surrounded Jun Xie, obviously having no intention to let him off easy.

Li Zi Mu watched as the scene unfolded before his eyes, and his heart secretly leapt in glee, but his face showed a look of disapproval instead, and he proceeded to say amicably: “We are all fellow disciples here, and even if Jun Xie had almost succeeded in

stealing my position in the Spirit Healer faculty, I do not think that he did it on purpose.”

“Not on purpose! ? How can something like that not be on purpose! ? The fact was that Master Gu did not choose him and he was not aware of that! ? He was just hoping against hope based on the chance meeting during enrollment to climb up higher! Zi Mu, you should stay out of this. If the brat does not apologise to you here today, we will not let it slide.” The group of youths exclaimed in indignation.

The commotion attracted the attention of all the other disciples in the dining hall. The eyes of the seniors turned as well because their curiosity had already been piqued by all the swirling rumours surrounding the freshmen and having chanced upon this great show put up by the newly admitted disciples, they all stood up and found themselves a good spot to enjoy the show.

Chapter 410: “Defamation (2)”

Jun Wu Xie stared coldly at the farce playing out before her eyes. That Li Zi Mu could really act. Outwardly, he seemed to be always trying to smooth things out, but every statement he made was in fact condemning Jun Wu Xie further.

His sentences were often littered with words like Jun Xie “stealing” and “snatching” his well deserved spot in the Spirit Healer faculty.

Persuasion in such a way would have no effect but to defame Jun Xie further and also hang up a halo upon Li Zi Mu for being so magnanimous.

At that moment, Jun Xie was surrounded on all sides by the youths and the seniors in the dining hall were all just watching on to see how the show would play out. Not a single person among them was willing to step forth to speak out on Jun Wu Xie’s behalf.

Whether the truth was as the group of youths had claimed it to be did not matter an ounce to all the other disciples there.

“Move.” Jun Wu Xie stood up and said, her cold eyes staring at the youths blocking her passage.

Jun Wu Xie’s eyes made the youths freeze in place. They had never seen anyone’s eyes so cold and chilly. Those eyes made them feel like they had just been doused in icy waters and it chilled them to their bones.

But they recovered very soon and regained their earlier bravado.

It was just a puny brat before them, what did they have to be afraid of when there were so many of them?

“Jun Xie! Do not take things too far! Having committed such atrocities, shouldn’t you at least apologise to Zi Mu? Do you know because of your actions, Zi Mu’s destiny to become a Spirit Healer was almost dashed! ?” Another youth saw that Jun Xie was

refusing to apologise and trying to leave, added adamantly in displeasure.

“Apologise?” Jun Wu Xie’s eyebrow raised and those piercingly chilly eyes swept through the crowd to land on Li Zi Mu.

Li Zi Mu was taken aback but he remained silent. He knew the truth behind the matter and he was sure Jun Xie knew it too. If Jun Xie were to reveal the truth and uncover his lies before everyone.....

Li Zi Mu calmed himself down quickly. So what if Jun Xie told them the truth? The suspicions buried within everyone’s hearts had sprouted even if he was to tell everyone that this was all a misunderstanding, no one would believe him and think that Jun Xie was just trying to find excuses for his shameless actions!

With that belief, Li Zi Mu puffed up his chest once again.

“That’s right! You should apologise!” A youth at the side shouted.

Jun Wu Xie laughed coldly at that moment. She found that she really deeply despised this group of noisy and brainless youths.

“I’ll say it one more time. Move.” Jun Wu Xie’s eyes turned frosty.

“What? What are you saying! ?” The group of youths were shocked by what Jun Wu Xie said and they widened their eyes in shock!

The brat actually had the cheek to ask them to move?

How could anyone be so shameless! ?

“Alright! It seems you would not be going down without a struggle! I would personally like to see whether you would be able to walk out of here today!”

Jun Wu Xie’s eyes narrowed dangerously and her spirit power started to envelope her in an orange glow. The little black cat that had been in her arms hopped up onto her shoulders and stared

with its slitted eyes, looking at the bunch of youths who didn't know death was almost upon them.

The orange flare reflected in the eyes of the youths surrounding Jun Wu Xie and they were suddenly overtaken by fear. They had only remembered that Jun Xie was the youngest among the new intake of disciples and he was also the smallest in size. They had outrageously forgotten that Jun Xie also held the strongest spiritual power among them all!

They instinctively took a step back. But when they saw the tiny little black cat on Jun Xie's shoulders who did not look like it would pose any threat to them, they pulled their hearts back down from the top of their throats and calmed themselves.

He was just a orange spirit and he possessed such a weak ring spirit. If a brawl was to break out, they would still stand a good chance against Jun Xie!

Li Zi Mu stood at the back of the crowd observing Jun Xie's every action, and the wicked smile on his face grew wider.

If Jun Xie were to lay a finger on the other disciples by attacking any of them, he would have undeniably broken the academy rules!

He would then be immediately thrown out of the academy altogether!

Chapter 411: “Defamation (3)”

Once Jun Xie was thrown out, Li Zi Mu would not have to worry about his lies being exposed anymore. And it would be beneath a revered Master like Gu Li Sheng to get involved in such common disputes between mere disciples besides being shown up as favouring some disciples over others.

So, as long as he could get rid of Jun Xie here, he would forever be seen as the suffering victim!

Sparks flew around the commotion within the dining hall and a faint black mist had started to envelope the little black cat.

Jun Wu Xie’s eyes were already icily frosty. Her personality might be rather distant and she did not like to mix with other people, she was however the kind to refuse to back down from humiliation and abuse.

“What are all of you doing there! ?” Suddenly, a shout reverberated throughout the dining hall. The shout sounded like thunder and hurt the eyes of everyone within the hall!

A figure streaked past them, coming suddenly to stand beside Jun Xie. The big and tall figure blocked Jun Xie’s tiny frame completely from the crowd before Jun Xie, drawing all the unfriendly eyes onto himself.

“Se..... Senior Fan?” The group of youths who had been about to pounce on Jun Xie realised who the tall figure that stood before them was and the frenzied atmosphere immediately subsided.

The towering figure before Jun Xie, blocking the youths’ way was none other than Fan Jin!

Fan Jin usual carefree smile had suddenly disappeared without a trace and his face was now dark as thunder, his fiery gaze sweeping over all the youths surrounding Jun Xie.

Fan Jin had just stepped into the dining hall when he had

immediately spotted that frail and tiny figure surrounded by a whole group of menacing youths. Seeing such a quiet and withdrawn little boy standing alone and helpless within the aggressive circle of youths evoke Fan Jin's protective nature. He did not hesitate a moment and rushed to stand up against the mob!

"What do you want with Jun Xie?" Fan Jin asked sternly of the unfriendly youths with a frown on his face.

Fan Jin's fierce glare swept over the newly admitted freshmen and they suddenly felt their knees shaking before the towering senior before them.

They knew who Fan Jin was! He came in fourth in the last Spirit Battle Tournament! Throughout the whole Zephyr Academy, the only people who were able to best him in battle, numbered only three!

And the fact that he was also the adopted son of the Headmaster, gave Fan Jin an invisible elevated status that the youths did not dare provoke.

Even most of the other senior disciples did not dare go against Fan Jin, and it was a given mere freshmen would not dare to even so much as squeak in protest.

"We..... we just wanted Jun Xie here..... to apologise to Zi Mu....." The arrogance previously seen had now completely disappeared as one of the youths murmured, his head hung low between his shoulders.

"Apologise?" Fan Jin's frown grew deeper.

"Yes. Jun Xie had almost stolen Zi Mu's position in the Spirit Healer faculty and almost caused Zi Mu to miss his chance to become a Spirit Healer. Jun..... Jun Xie should apologise for that. All we are asking for is just an apology..... And we did not do anything to her." Another youth defended his companions' actions softly, adamantly feeling they were not in the wrong.

Just an apology? Fan Jin's eyes narrowed as his gaze swept over the overturned table and the shattered bowls and dishes, and he laughed coldly in his heart.

A whole group of youths surrounding Jun Xie completely, and creating such a mess. If it was just an apology they sought, they wouldn't have needed to create such a mess.

But.....

"What do you mean by stealing Zi Mu's position? Jun Xie was the disciple that Master Gu had picked, I do not want all of you spouting all this nonsense." Fan Jin said with a deep frown.

"Senior Fan, you do not know?" The youths asked upon hearing Fan Jin's words, their eyes suddenly shining in hope.

They had just been thinking, that Fan Jin had always been known upright and fought for justice. How would he choose to stand up for such a despicable miscreant like Jun Xie? It seemed like Senior Fan was still unaware of what has happened!

"Know what?" Fan Jin asked impatiently. He had been training the whole morning in the Beast Spirit faculty and had just finished. He did not hear anything of the tumultuous news that had spread throughout the whole Zephyr Academy that morning.

Chapter 412: “Defamation (4)”

“Master Gu kicked Jun Xie out of the Spirit Healer faculty early this morning and said that Jun Xie was not a disciple of the Spirit Healer faculty at all. The real disciple that Master Gu selected was Zi Mu. You can look here Senior Fan, Zi Mu is wearing the jade emblem symbolic of the Spirit Healer faculty, and Master Gu had personally pinned it on him.” The youths hurried pushed Li Zi Mu to the front, who had been hiding at the back of the crowd all this time.

Li Zi Mu’s skinny body when pushed to face up to Fan Jin’s towering frame immediately went limp.

Li Zi Mu might have been smug about having been accepted into the Spirit Healer faculty, but he still did not dare face up to Fan Jin squarely.

Fan Jin’s brow furrowed as he stared at the weak and frightened Li Zi Mu before him. Although his eyes were filled with disdain at Li Zi Mu’s actions, he was certain that the jade emblem on his chest was indeed from the Spirit Healer faculty.

What was going on here?

Fan Jin remembered very clearly. On the night before the new disciples were admitted, Gu Li Sheng had asked Fan Jin to see him at the Spirit Healer faculty and said to him that he had set his eye on an applicant who had enrolled into the Zephyr Academy a couple of days ago. He was waiting for the new disciples to be admitted and would bring that disciple straight into the Spirit Healer faculty. Gu Li Sheng had explicitly said the two words “Jun Xie” and there was definitely no mention of anything near Li Zi Mu.

Even the uniform that Jun Xie was wearing was claimed by Fan Jin himself and he had handed them to Jun Xie together with the Spirit Healer faculty jade emblem.

That had only been barely half a day ago! How did things become like this?

“What’s your name?” Fan Jin stared at Li Zi Mu and asked.

“Li..... Li Zi Mu.” Li Zi Mu was quivering under Fan Jin’s stare.

“Your jade emblem was given to you by Master Gu?” Fan Jin asked again.

Li Zi Mu nodded while trembling, and he stuttered as he replied: “It..... it was pinned by..... by my Master himself.....”

Fan Jin’s frown grew deeper.

He knew his memory was fine. But things have gotten so confusing. The boy standing before him was totally useless, he was even unable to stand upright before him, and he was the disciple that Uncle Gu had set his sights on and decided to carefully nurture with all his heart? That was not possible!

That was the first time Fan Jin doubted Gu Li Sheng’s eye for spotting talents, and he wondered if Gu Li Sheng was ill.

“I think there must have been a misunderstanding in all this. Jun Xie did not steal your position and do not let me hear anyone bring this up to bother Jun Xie after this, or I will not let that person off easily.” He was not able to find anything weird in the situation before him and Fan Jin decided to quell the tension here for the time being.

It did not matter whether Jun Xie was the disciple Gu Li Sheng chose, and Fan Jin liked Jun Xie anyway. He found Jun Xie to be a quiet and fiercely independent junior and he saw nothing to dislike about the boy.

With Fan Jin’s warning, the other youths did not dare to object and nodded vehemently, not daring to say another word.

After seeing that the group of youths had backed down, Fan Jin finally turned to Jun Xie and saw that he was still enveloped in his

spiritual power's orange glow. He hurriedly coaxed: "I know you would not do such a thing like that. Don't let them affect you so much. If anyone gets hurt here, there will be no end to the trouble that will come after."

He might not have faced Jun Xie all this time, but Fan Jin could sense the intense murder in Jun Xie's eyes.

Fan Jin himself had been shocked when he saw the cold chilling murder in those eyes. He suddenly realised that if he had not appeared when he had, the ones taken down would not be Jun Xie, but the ignorant youths who had surrounded the tiny figure before his eyes.

Under Fan Jin's patient coaxing, the murder in Jun Xie's eyes faded, and the pair of clear eyes regained back its cold calm.

Without knowing why, Fan Jin heaved a big sigh of relief when he saw that.

Chapter 413: “Defamation (5)”

With Fan Jin’s stern warning, the other youths did not dare object, but their eyes showed that they were not convinced.

On the second level, Senior Ning observed everything that was going on and her attractive lips curled up. She raised a hand and pointed it at Fan Jin who was saying something to Jun Xie and said: “Fan Jin messed up big time. It seems that the brat Jun Xie can really put up a good act, having fooled Fan Jin so completely. I think, if that brat had not revealed to Fan Jin that he would be admitted into the Spirit Healer faculty, I do not think Fan Jin would have been so eager to be his mentor. I wonder, now that his hopes have clearly been dashed, he must be feeling mighty disappointed. Don’t you think so, Little Yan?”

Yin Yan’s face was split with a wide sinister smile. Seeing Fan Jin’s hopes completely dashed made him happier than anyone else.

“Remember the year you had just been admitted? Fan Jin was supposed to mentor you but he totally disobeyed the Vice Headmaster and adamantly refused to lead you into the academy. Do you still remember the humiliation when everyone laughed at you?” Senior Ning turned her eyes to Yin Yan to say.

Yin Yan replied with his eyes narrowed: “I will never forget that day, when Fan Jin brought me untold shame and disgrace.”

That year, Yin Yan had just been admitted into the Zephyr Academy and Fan Jin had not joined the Spirit Battle Tournament yet. He had not been ranked and was selected to be a mentor to the new intake of disciples. At that time, Yin Yan had been allocated to Fan Jin. Yin Yan’s innate talent was rather strong and he had caught the eye of the Vice Headmaster. He had specially instructed Fan Jin take care of the new junior but who knew Fan Jin had suddenly refused him outright, disobeying the Vice Headmaster’s request, and stormed off without even giving Yin Yan a single

glance.

Since that day, Yin Yan became the butt of many jokes among a lot of the other disciples. Being rejected by Fan Jin, had made him look to be too weak and if it had not been for Senior Ning, who had extended her hand to help him by accepting Yin Yan as her ward, he might have left the academy under the jeers and abuse of the other disciples.

Soon after, Yin Yan had been fortunate enough to be selected to join the Spirit Healer faculty and that had wiped the slate clean for him. But Fan Jin's rejection had left an indelible mark on Yin Yan and he had not been able to get over it.

"Isn't this a good chance for you? Let Fan Jin take a good and proper look at you now. At how outstanding you have become after he rejected you before everyone then. And how weak the Jun Xie he had picked himself actually was compared to you." Senior Ning coaxed with a benign smile on her lips.

Yin Yan smiled darkly and nodded: "My senior is wise, your junior has learnt a lot."

After saying that, Yin Yan walked down to the ground level.

On the ground level of the dining hall, the noisy commotion had died down with the appearance of Fan Jin.

"Don't worry, I will go ask Uncle Gu what is really going on." Fan Jin looked at Jun Xie cold and expressionless face and was somehow feeling helpless. He did not doubt Jun Xie, just for the fact that Jun Xie had broken through to an orange spirit at the young age of fourteen was what many people could never even hope for. Moreover, even being so young, Jun Xie was nevertheless extremely sensible and intelligent, all these traits could not have possibly escaped Gu Li Sheng's eyes.

And now, he was being told that Gu Li Sheng had picked the douchebag Li Zi Mu over Jun Xie, that did not sit well with him at

all.

Jun Xie replied simply: “No need.”

Fan Jin sighed and patted Jun Xie reassuringly on the shoulder. “Forget it, don’t eat here anymore. I’ll bring you someplace good, I guarantee the food will be better than what they serve here.”

Jun Wu Xie nodded slightly. Although she wasn’t hungry, she did not want to reject Fan Jin’s good intentions shown to her.

Jun Wu Xie had come a ways since her being reborn, and she was just starting to be able to accept the good in others, and was gradually learning to accept and reciprocate.

And just as the two of them were about to leave, a voice suddenly rose from one side.

“Having Senior Fan protect his junior Jun Xie might be completely understandable, but if the junior had committed a wrong and do not even offer a simple apology, that might seem just a little bit too much.”

Chapter 414: “Defamation (6)”

All heads turned at the source of the voice and saw Yin Yan smiling at Fan Jin and Jun Xie, who were just about to leave.

Upon seeing the white jade emblem hanging on Yin Yan’s chest, everyone knew where he was from.

A Spirit Healer faculty disciple had actually stepped forth!

Fan Jin had said earlier that there had been a misunderstanding somewhere, and his unique position and esteemed reputation had made many of the seniors to start to doubt whether the events had really happened as Li Zi Mu had said. But now, a disciple from the Spirit Healer faculty itself, which had been the focal point where all this ruckus had stemmed from, had suddenly appeared, and condemned Jun Xie for not apologising.

What did that mean?

Did that mean that all the disciples of the Spirit Healer faculty knew the truth about what had exactly transpired, and they have a good reason to be making things difficult for Jun Xie?

The scales that had been balanced by Fan Jin, had suddenly tipped precariously again with Yin Yan’s appearance.

Fan Jin stared at Yin Yan with a frown.

Jun Wu Xie stopped in her tracks and stared at her roommate who was adding fuel to the dying embers.

There had only been two instances when Yin Yan and Jun Wu Xie had encountered each other, but that had been more than enough for Jun Wu Xie to know Yin Yan held great enmity for her.

Yin Yan walked slowly towards the pair. When he saw all the heads turn towards him after he spoke, he laughed in glee in his heart.

The show was just about to begin.

“Having Senior Fan being protective of Jun Xie really shows us the care and concern you have for your junior. But if you want everyone to forget the whole incident just because of that care, not many people would be convinced. Whenever a wrong is committed, punishment should be meted out. Trying to take Li Zi Mu’s place to enter the Spirit Healer faculty obviously shows Jun Xie was in the wrong, and even if we spare him any punishment, a word of apology is still necessary at least. If not, wouldn’t it make people think that the Zephyr Academy do not even differentiate between simple right and wrong? Just because a disciple is shielded by you, they can carry out any wrongdoing without fear? And have the victimised disciples swallow the humiliation in bitter silence?”

Yin Yan voice spoke neither too fast nor too slow, and every single word was driven deeply into the hearts of everyone present.

Yin Yan’s words insinuated that Fan Jin was using his fame and position in the Zephyr Academy to erase Jun Xie’s wrongdoing and using his influence to force Li Zi Mu into submission.

His venomous words had trampled upon Jun Wu Xie and taken a swipe at Fan Jin at the same time.

As expected, after Yin Yan’s words, the dining hall erupted in whispers of guesses and debate.

Fan Jin’s face darkened immediately. He might be the Headmaster’s adopted son, but he had never relied on that identity to complete anything that he set out to do. Instead, it had been because of his unique situation, that he could not afford to be less hardworking than all the others, and fight to be more outstanding before he would ever be acknowledged.

But Yin Yan’s words was effectively trying to undo all his years of effort put in.

“Yin Yan, do you know what you are talking about? Does anyone have any proof that Jun Xie had done any of that intentionally?”

The world is full of misunderstandings and how do you know this is not one of them?” Fan Jin asked with his eyes narrowed, as he pushed down the rage threatening to well up within.

“Oh? From what Senior Fan is saying, does it mean that Senior Fan knows the truth? I would really like to hear it. If I have misunderstood Jun Xie, I will apologise to him. If I haven’t, I would ask that Senior Fan not to be overly protective as it is always good to learn from mistakes. If not, if Jun Xie were to stir up any more trouble in future, wouldn’t he think that Senior Fan would have his back and not fear the consequences?” Yin Yan said with a smile. When he saw Fan Jin frowning in fury, Yin Yan nevertheless felt comforted.

Fan Jin’s brow was deeply creased. If he knew the truth of the matter, he would have revealed it all earlier and not have allowed all these youths to defame Jun Xie like this.

But he had only just gotten to know about this and as to what had actually transpired, he had not had the time to find out as yet.

Yin Yan was however still pushy, not showing any signs of letting up.

Chapter 415: “Defamation (7)”

Yin Yan’s words that “defended injustice” made Li Zi Mu shocked. When he had gone to the Spirit Healer faculty earlier today, he had met Yin Yan. But the senior had not shown himself to be the least bit cordial and Li Zi Mu would never have thought Yin Yan would step forth as a disciple of the Spirit Healer faculty here against Jun Xie.

But from Yin Yan’s words, it was obvious that Yin Yan believed Li Zi Mu’s side of the story and that greatly bolstered Li Zi Mu’s confidence.

With that reinforced courage, Li Zi Mu went along with Yin Yan to say: “Actually, I had really not intended to stir up any trouble with Jun Xie in regards to this matter, and was hoping only for a mere apology. If he had realised his mistake, I would still see him as a fellow disciple and forget about the whole incident.”

Li Zi Mu’s and Yin Yan’s duet only served to drive all the other disciples into seeing Jun Xie as a despicable and incorrigible person, throwing dirt upon Jun Xie’s personality and reputation.

Fan Jin fumed as his rage grew.

But Jun Wu Xie only stared coldly at Yin Yan and Li Zi Mu.

“Meow~”

[Mistress, those two are in cahoots and attempting to tarnish your name! Let me take a bite out of both of them!]

Having just awoken from its injuries, the little black cat was eager to give its body a little exercise as it licked its fangs. If it was not for Fan Jin’s appearance, it would have easily sent these idiots up to meet their maker with its Mistress, and they would not have had to hear all this nonsense.

“No rush.” Jun Wu Xie said, narrowing her eyes.

They wanted to play, she was game enough to take them on.

They still had long days ahead of them. She would return what they gave her today, a hundred times over!

Just as the atmosphere in the dining hall was getting too oppressive to even breathe, Jun Xie who had been silent all this while suddenly said: “Senior Fan, let’s go eat.”

That cold chill voice that sounded throughout the dining hall somehow broke the oppression and made it easier for everyone to breathe.

Fan Jin was shocked a moment and he stared at Jun Xie with a questioning look on his face.

Is the kid aware of what is happening here? He still had to mood to eat?

If things here were not handled properly today, and even if Jun Xie were to stay on in the Zephyr Academy, he would definitely face harsh times ahead of him here.

Attempting to take the place of someone to be admitted into the Spirit Healer faculty, with such an accusation over his head, Jun Xie would be viewed through coloured lenses by teachers and disciples alike whichever faculty he ended up in hereafter.

However, Jun Xie did not care about any of this. After saying that, he turned to walk away.

Before she finds a way to improve the Spirit Healing technique, she could not afford to be found out on what she would be doing. But once she completes the technique.....

Jun Wu Xie’s cold eyes, were suddenly overcome with the frosty murder once again.

The other youths were all still quivering before Fan Jin’s presence and did not stand in Jun Xie’s way.

Fan Jin stood, his feet still rooted to the ground in surprise as he

saw Jun Xie's back getting further away from him. He suddenly recovered and rushed to catch up with Jun Xie. He did not dare to leave Jun Xie to walk alone and unaccompanied throughout the Zephyr Academy after this incident.

A brawl had been on the verge of breaking out earlier, and the one who had been the target had suddenly turned and walked off. Without a single word of explanation, and neither showing any intention to apologise, Jun Xie's nonchalant attitude almost made it seem like he had been an innocent bystander and the ruckus had absolutely nothing to do with him.

Everyone within the dining hall were flabbergasted by Jun Xie's shocking words and even Yin Yan was suddenly thrown off and did not know how to react. He had prepared and filled his whole chest full of thought out words meant to disgrace Fan Jin in front of all the disciples present, but..... Jun Xie had suddenly denied him of the chance.

She had not been confident of ridding herself of the enemies completely then, so Jun Wu Xie had decided not to rush into her vengeance yet.

When he saw that the figures of Fan Jin and Jun Xie had disappeared past the doors of the dining hall, Li Zi Mu who had been standing on one side rushed to come before Yin Yan and bowed deeply in acquiescence to say: "Thank you Senior for your words of justice."

Chapter 416: “Defamation (8)”

Yin Yan was not able to achieve his objective and he was feeling rather frustrated. Hearing Li Zi Mu’s voice filled with adoration, Yin Yan turned and shot Li Zi Mu a scathing glance.

Words of justice?

He had no interest in defending such trash!

Just at the moment when Yin Yan was about to lash out, a figure drifted gracefully to come stand beside Yin Yan suddenly.

“Since you and Little Yan are both from the Spirit Healer faculty, it is only right that he defends you and not allow you to suffer any injustice.” A young and beautiful girl approached the pair and when Li Zi Mu saw the ravishing smile shine upon him, he found himself suddenly stunned.

Li Zi Mu could not take his eyes off the beauty before him.

“Senior Ning?” Yin Yan quickly swallowed his admonishment when Senior Ning came close.

Senior Ning graced him with a gentle smile and turned her gaze on Li Zi Mu to say: “To have gained entry into the Spirit Healer faculty, it must have been due to your own abilities. Get along well with Little Yan there in future.”

“Yes..... yes, sure..... Se..... Senior Ning.” Li Zi Mu was mesmerised by the beauty and was not entirely conscious, and just addressed the beauty as Yin Yan had.

Senior Ning gave him another gentle smile and she threw Yin Yan a look before the two of them left the dining hall.

Even after they had left, Li Zi Mu was still lost in rapture.

Outside the dining hall, Yin Yan wore his displeasure upon his face.

“Senior Ning should not have wasted your breath on such trash.

My Master might have accepted him, but he had not even given him any instruction in the technique.” When he saw Senior Ning grace Li Zi Mu with her smile earlier, Yin Yan had felt his heart constrict.

Li Zi Mu was timid as a mouse and Yin Yan despised him totally.

Senior Ning looked at Yin Yan and her smile disappeared slowly from her face. “Little Yan, do you really think Master Gu will accept just any nobody as his only disciple for the year? That Li Zi Mu might look dumb, but for him to have won Master Gu’s favour, there must be a reason behind all this. Remember this, just maintain a superficially amicable relationship with him. If he turns out to be useful, it would be best if he is used by us.”

Yin Yan fell into silence a moment and erased all traces of his displeasure from his face before he lowered his head in deference. “Senior Ning is right as usual. I have been ignorant.”

“There are very few Spirit Healers around, and any additional one will only increase our might. The Li Zi Mu is dumb, but he is also easily manipulated. And his conflict with Jun Xie can be further exploited. After seeing the way Fan Jin defended Jun Xie today, can’t you see that Fan Jin had placed high importance on that brat? If you have something against Fan Jin, you should make your move through his tiny little ward. Fan Jin is always careful and it has always been difficult to find fault with him. But whereas for the little Jun Xie, it is relatively easy.” Senior Ning gave a light laugh. People with weaknesses are the easiest to take down.

Yin Yan’s eyes shone brightly, immediately catching on to the meaning behind Senior Ning’s words.

“Rest assured Senior Ning. I will make sure to get along with that Li Zi Mu and not allow Fan Jin and Jun Xie any peace.”

Senior Ning nodded in satisfaction.

“If that Jun Xie does not stay on in the Zephyr Academy after this

then all of this won't matter. But if he is to stay on, make good use of Li Zi Mu. His tumultuous days are just beginning and remember to not leave any traces that would link any of it back to us. If we can make Jun Xie get into big enough trouble, his dear mentor Fan Jin would be dragged in together and would definitely at least be reprimanded by the Headmaster."

"Yes!"

Senior Ning and Yin Yan were plotting how to make use of Jun Wu Xie to hit out at Fan Jin here while.....

Fan Jin had totally cast away all those worrying thoughts to the wind and was leading Jun Xie across the expansive campus of the Zephyr Academy before they came to stand before what seemed to look like someone's living quarters tucked in a corner of the Zephyr Academy.

Chapter 417: “The Fan Brothers (1)”

Off the main thoroughfare and through a tiny patch of woods, a snaking pebbled path wound through the grass leading a short way to a small bamboo forest.

Unless one was aware of this place, no one ever knew that within the grounds of the Zephyr Academy, such a quiet and tranquil little spot existed.

Fan Jin led the way bringing Jun Wu Xie to come to this place. Out in the courtyard, a youth about fifteen or sixteen years of age was sweeping up the leaves from the pebbled path, and when he saw Fan Jin and Jun Wu Xie approaching, he hastily went up to greet them.

“Eldest Master, you’ve arrived.” The youth’s eyes were filled with adulation for Fan Jin and when those eyes fell on Jun Wu Xie, they were soon tinged with query.

“Yes, and I’ve brought another little one to freeload for lunch. Is Little Zhuo having his lunch now?” Fan Jin stated his intentions unashamedly and that incited a suppressed chuckle from the youth, totally unable to dislike Fan Jin’s candidness.

“Please enter, Eldest Master.” The youth opened the door with a smile and he extended the same courtesy to Jun Wu Xie.

The gates made from bamboo were pushed opened and a wind chime hung at the corner of the door chimed. Within the pristine bamboo forest, the chime tinkled clearly and was very pleasing to the ear.

Fan Jin turned to nod his head and led Jun Xie into the courtyard.

The courtyard was not too big, but was exquisite and delicately furnished. The dwellings seen from within the courtyard were not extravagant but simple and succinct. There were three dwellings

built up and at the side of the quaint yard, a little spring ran, emptying into a small pool. The water was so clear you can see the bottom of the pool and red koi were swimming within stirring up small ripples.

With just her first glance, Jun Wu Xie loved the small yard, and the peace and tranquility in here.

The two of them were still walking when they saw a frail figure appear at the door of a bamboo dwelling directly facing them.

It was a skinny and weak youth. The blue clothes which had been tailored for him hung from his body, looking a size too big and the delicate face was deathly pale, even his lips. He stood slightly bent over, unbecoming of his young and supposed to be exuberant age. He was holding a bamboo walking stick in his hand and he was leaning his weight upon it. The youth looked to be frighteningly frail but he possessed a pair of clear and sparkling bright eyes. Those attractive eyes were smiling and when you saw those eyes, it made one forget the frailty of his body.

The moment Fan Jin saw the youth, he widened his steps and strode right up to hold up the youth's tottering body.

"The noon sun is so strong. You should be good and stay indoors, what are you doing out here?" Fan Jin asked with a disapproving frown on his face as he helped the youth slowly into the bamboo house, and he did not forget Jun Xie as he turned to him and said: "Jun Xie, come on inside as well."

The youth turned his head to look at Jun Wu Xie, the curiosity in those clear eyes piqued. He was assessing Jun Wu Xie, but the eyes were still friendly and were not offensive.

Jun Wu Xie nodded to the youth and she followed them inside.

The furnishings on the inside of the house was just as simple as it was outside in the yard, without any excessive decorations. Fan Jin helped the youth to sit down on a chair by the table while asking

Jun Xie to make himself comfortable while he himself sat beside the frail youth.

“Big brother, aren’t you going to introduce us?” The frail youth looked at Jun Wu Xie smiling earnestly.

Fan Jin replied: “This is Jun Xie. I had told you about him earlier, the new disciple I would be mentoring. And Jun Xie, this is my younger brother, Fan Zhuo.”

Fan Zhuo looked at Jun Wu Xie and his eyes sparkled with his smile. “So you are Jun Xie? If my big brother had not told me you were already fourteen, I would have thought you were only twelve or thirteen looking at your small petite frame. You should take care to eat and drink well everyday, and not hurt your body.”

Fan Zhuo had a weak body himself and he knew very well how a weak body dragged him down.

Chapter 418: “The Fan Brothers (2)”

Jun Wu Xie looked at Fan Zhuo sitting before her and immediately realised the identity of the frail boy next to Fan Jin.

The Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy had two sons. The adopted Fan Jin and the other one was the youth looking smilingly at her, Fan Zhuo.

Fan Zhuo was the Headmaster’s biological son but he was born with a weak body constitution compared to others. He was sixteen years old and seldom stepped out through his doors. Because of Fan Zhuo’s weak body, the Headmaster could be said to have spared no efforts and spent endless riches on huge amounts of fortification medicine and elixirs to keep him alive.

To people outside, few knew what Fan Zhuo looked like and only knew he suffered from a weak body constitution.

Jun Wu Xie discreetly observed Fan Zhuo’s countenance.

Under the loose clothes, the emaciated body was barely skin and bones, which made people wince with worry to see. His complexion was deathly pale and under his thin skin, his blood vessels were visible. The torment brought about by that weak body could not be comprehended by an average person but in this instance, even under the agonizing pain, Fan Zhuo had nevertheless maintained a stout heart. His genuine smile was not one that people would usually link to a boy who might lose his life at any minute.

Jun Wu Xie had a good impression of both of the Fan brothers. Fan Jin had defended her repeatedly and that might have contributed to her having easily liked Fan Zhuo, as birds of a feather, flock together.

“Haha, Little Zhuo. You’ve hit it right on the nail this time. To be honest, I brought Little Xie here today to freeload off your

scrumptious food here. The food in the academy's dining hall not edible. I know you have lots of good stuff here, so hurry and ask Ah Jing to whip up something for us to have a taste or two." Fan Jin said laughing. It dawned on Jun Wu Xie that the place Fan Jin had mentioned that had great food must have been here, and he had intended to exploit his own brother all along.

Fan Zhuo laughed along and seemed used to his brother frequent "exploitation". He shook a bell on the table with his hand and soon, the youth Ah Jing, came rushing into the room, still holding a broom in his hand.

"Young Master, what do you need?"

"Bring us some food."

"Yes."

Ah Jing slipped out quickly to go prepare.

Fan Jin laughed out loud in satisfaction and turned to Jun Wu Xie to say: "Little Zhuo's body is weak and usually has no appetite. Common fare would only further discourage his picky palate and our father has instead arranged for lots of good stuff to be prepared and sent here. Let me tell you this, if you ever want something nice to eat in future, just come find Little Zhuo here and you won't go wrong."

Fan Zhuo did not mind but instead gave Jun Wu Xie a smile and said: "Don't listen to my big brother's nonsense. The food here is just average but my body is unable to digest normal food properly, so my father has made some special arrangements for me. If in future you find yourself unused to the food in the dining hall, you can just come here. Having another person to eat with would make it livelier and I'll have some company."

The smooth delivery of the duet from the two brothers might have been rather impromptu and unplanned, but they truly meant every single word they said.

Being around these two warm people, Jun Wu Xie felt a tiny warmth light within her cold chill heart.

“Thanks.” Jun Wu Xie replied.

Fan Zhuo was still smiling and his eyes were fixated on the little black cat standing on Jun Wu Xie’s shoulders, and with a questioning look in his eyes, he started to ask: “This cat.....”

“That is Little Xie’s ring spirit.” Fan Jin said.

“Can I have a closer look at it?” Fan Zhuo’s eyes did not move as he looked at the cat longingly.

Fan Jin turned to look at Fan Zhuo and then he turned to look at Jun Wu Xie before he said hesitatingly: “A ring spirit is not just any ordinary animal, it should be alright.”

Jun Wu Xie looked at Fan Jin, not understanding what he had meant, but Fan Jin only smiled.

The little black cat could feel that its mistress had a rather good impression of the two brothers and they had been rather nice to Jun Wu Xie as well. The cat finally gave in and jumped down from Jun Wu Xie’s shoulders to land on the table, before walking slowly to come before Fan Zhuo.

Chapter 419: “The Fan Brothers (3)”

The little black cat came to stand before Fan Zhuo. His unwavering eyes stared at the little black cat while his breath slowed considerably, and his pale face showed a tinge of nervousness.

The little black cat tilted its head when it saw Fan Zhuo become so excited that he could not even make himself raise his hand to touch it. The black cat gave up and extended a tiny paw and put it on Fan Zhuo’s hand that was resting on the table.

“Meow~”

[Mistress, in order for you to integrate into society, I have even sacrificed my body! Do you see that my love for you is real?]

Jun Wu Xie heard the little black cat’s proclamation and the corner of her mouth twitched a little.

However, the expression on Fan Zhuo’s face was frozen, his clear eyes filled with shock and excitement.....

On his usually pale face, two faintly pink clouds suddenly appeared.

“.....” The little black cat stared at Fan Zhuo, speechless at the expression it would have expected to see on a shy new bride instead of Fan Zhuo.

He had been the one that had asked to be allowed to touch and the little black cat had readily been willing to sacrifice its own body, and in the end, Fan Zhuo was the one looking like he was the one having been taken advantage of?

Fan Jin saw the expression on his own brother’s face and coughed lightly before he turned to Jun Wu Xie looking a little embarrassed to say: “Little Zhuo has a weakness for furry little animals but animals have never taken well to him since young. Little animals do not seem to like him too much.”

Although the little black cat was a ring spirit, it was nevertheless the first animal to initiate contact with Fan Zhuo, and Fan Zhuo's heart had almost melted away at the little black cat's touch.

After hearing Fan Jin's explanation, Jun Wu Xie surprised Fan Jin when she nodded in agreement and said: "Soft and furry..... Nice to touch."

The little black cat put its paw over its face!

So!

Its mistress had found a comrade that shared a common interest now! ?

Sure enough, when he heard Jun Wu Xie's words, Fan Zhuo lifted his head and stared at Jun Wu Xie with sparkling eyes.

"You like them too?"

Jun Wu Xie nodded gravely, in all seriousness.

"Then..... then would you come here everyday for lunch? I..... I will make sure Ah Jing prepares something nice!" Fan Zhuo's cheeks grew rosier and his sparkling eyes were fixed on the paw upon his hand.

"I will." Jun Wu Xie nodded to agree. Everything that happened in the dining hall today really got on her nerves and if she did not have to go there anymore, that would save her from having to dirty her ears and eyes further there.

Fan Zhuo's face broke out into a wide smiling, blooming like a flower, and his eyes seemed suddenly filled with life.

The three youths chatted for a while, and Ah Jing had prepared a table full of goodies as he brought them all out. Fan Jin, whose stomach had been filled with exasperation in the dining hall suddenly felt them all drain away as he looks at the feast before his eyes. He asked his brother and Jun Xie to hurry and pick up their chopsticks while his own pair flew over the dishes in a flurry,

emptying the dishes on the table, in moments.

That speed, did not leave Jun Wu Xie and Fan Zhuo a single chance. When the other two were just about to pick up their chopsticks, all that was left on the dishes were some gravy and some slivers of vegetable garnishings.....

“Cough, I’ll ask Ah Jing to make some more.” Fan Zhuo turned to Jun Wu Xie, looking embarrassed for his brother’s actions. His brother’s appetite was directly proportionate to their body size, one Fan Jin to ten Fan Zhuo.

Fan Jin patted his bulging tummy in great satisfaction. And when he looked up and saw that Fan Zhuo and Jun Wu Xie had not even moved their chopsticks, he finally realised that he might have gulped down his food a little too fast.

“Ahem..... I think..... You guys can just carry on. I just remembered that there is something I need to do and will need to leave for a while. Little Xie, you should stay and accompany Little Zhuo after finishing the meal. Normally, there is only me and Ah Jing around and Little Zhuo does not get the chance to interact with anyone else close to his age. I will come pick you up later.” After saying that, Fan Jin blew out the door, kicking up a draft.

The little black cat lay on Jun Wu Xie’s shoulders lazily, and its whiskers trembled as it looked in the direction that Fan Jin had disappeared, quick as lightning.

Expecting its mistress to be a chatty companion? Is Fan Jin brain in the right place! ?

Its mistress social skills were close to zero! How was she supposed to be able to carry out a decent conversation with Fan Zhuo who had lived almost like a hermit all his life! ?

Chapter 420: “Gu Li Sheng’s Rage (1)”

After leaving the bamboo forest, Fan Jin made his way hurriedly to the Spirit Healer faculty. In front of Fan Zhuo and Jun Wu Xie, he had appeared to be his usual self, but the incident in the dining hall had greatly perplexed him.

How did Jun Xie get kicked out of the Spirit Healer faculty?

And just who was Li Zi Mu to stir up such a ruckus?

In the Spirit Healer faculty campus, Gu Li Sheng was checking on the disciples’ progress in their training when the door into his office was pushed open. He was startled a moment before he looked up to see Fan Jin panting heavily at his door, and his face broke into a smile.

“What brought you all the way here to see me today?”

Fan Jin entered the office, and closed the door. He asked immediately: “It’s regarding Jun Xie. What is really going on? Where did that Li Zi Mu sprout up from? Uncle Gu, have you made a mistake here?”

While he was making his way here, Fan Jin had compared that Li Zi Mu to Jun Wu Xie hundreds of times in his mind. No matter which way he looked at it, that cowardly Li Zi Mu had only gained direct entry into the main division based on a not too shabby ring spirit. That weakling had absolutely no innate talent to even speak of, so how had Li Zi Mu managed to drive Jun Xie out of the Spirit Healer faculty and taken his position?

Gu Li Sheng was taken by surprise. He had not expected Fan Jin to have come see him regarding this matter.

“It was a mistake, haven’t I already said it?” Gu Li Sheng asked.

“Uncle Gu, what is so great about Li Zi Mu? If you really had no intention of accepting Jun Xie as your disciple from the start, why did you give him hope in the first place? Do you know how badly

all the other disciples in the academy are cursing and scolding Jun Xie now?” Fan Jin had always respected Gu Li Sheng and had developed a fondness for this elder who did not put on any airs. But in regards to the matter with Jun Xie this time, Gu Li Sheng had really lapsed in his consideration of the parties involved.

To Gu Li Sheng, it might be seen as a matter of little consequences, but to a new disciple who had just been admitted, it was a catastrophe.

If he had not chanced upon them today, he did not know how badly the youths with Li Zi Mu would have tormented Jun Xie.

Hearing Fan Jin’s accusatory tone, Gu Li Sheng was feeling rather confused.

“What are you talking about? Cursed and scolded? What is going on?” Gu Li Sheng felt that there was more than what he was hearing from Fan Jin and he hurriedly tried to ask more about it.

“What else could it be? It was your beloved newly accepted disciple, Li Zi Mu, who brought along a gang of his to make things difficult for Jun Xie. Accusing Jun Xie of stealing his position in the Spirit Healer faculty, and that you had never fancied Jun Xie. It was Jun Xie who came running to you on his own and got thrown out of here by you personally.” Fan Jin said, a little exasperated.

Gu Li Sheng’s face turned white. “Nonsense! When did I ever say that! ?”

Never fancied Jun Xie? How would he miss such gift! ?

He had set his sights on that little kid the moment he laid eyes on him. And the facts had shown him that he had a good eye for talent. Jun Xie had fully understood everything about his Spirit Healing technique within the extremely short period of time to burn an incense stick without practical practice and was even able to point out its inadequacies. However, it was precisely because of

that that Gu Li Sheng was afraid that Jun Xie would waste away his time here in the Spirit Healer faculty and allowed him to go learn how to train and develop his ring spirit in the Beast Spirit faculty while researching on ways to improve on the Spirit Healing technique.

That would allow Jun Xie to pick up more knowledge and also shield him from prying eyes and ears while the technique was still under research and development.

But his considerations for the little kid had backfired badly and that was something Gu Li Sheng had not expected.

Fan Jin felt that things were not as they seemed after seeing Gu Li Sheng's reactions and he forced himself to calm down and related the incident in the dining hall today in detail to Gu Li Sheng.

Gu Li Sheng's face contorted with rage after hearing what Fan Jin said!

"Those were the exact words from Li Zi Mu?" His face darkened and his voice turned low.

Fan Jin nodded.

Gu Li Sheng's face turned dark as thunder.

Chapter 421: “Gu Li Sheng’s Rage (2)”

What an audacious Li Zi Mu! Gu Li Sheng was almost bursting with anger!

He had recruited Li Zi Mu into the Spirit Healer faculty only to round out his plans. Jun Xie was to be protected by staying hidden and he had had to arrange for another disciple to be admitted into the Spirit Healer faculty to avoid raising any suspicions. He had accidentally bumped into Li Zi Mu on the first day the new disciples had been admitted and offhandedly chosen Li Zi Mu to be the disciple.

As for the matter with Jun Xie, Gu Li Sheng had explained it to the Headmaster and Li Zi Mu, saying that he had made a mistake himself and it had nothing to do with Jun Xie.

The intended purpose for his explanation had been exactly because he feared that the other disciples would deliberately make things difficult for Jun Xie after leaving the Spirit Healer faculty and had used his position as the Head of the Spirit Healer faculty to take on the blame for the “error”. He never would have expected that after telling Li Zi Mu the “truth” of the matter, he would actually totally disregard his words and spread such malicious rumours!

Seeing an imposter disseminating such vicious rumours that brought such calamity to his most treasured disciple made Gu Li Sheng almost want to tear Li Zi Mu to pieces.

Gu Li Sheng stared at Fan Jin in perplexity. He knew very well that in such a situation, it would not help much even if he were to step forth to explain himself once again as the vicious rumours had already spread and taken root throughout the whole Zephyr Academy.

The way things were now, Jun Xie’s days ahead in the Zephyr Academy could only be extremely difficult.

“Fan Jin, I have always trusted you and know that you are a trustworthy person. I would like to ask you to take good care of Jun Xie. The truth is.....”

Gu Li Sheng told Fan Jin the whole truth about Jun Xie. He decided to do that because of two things. Firstly, he fully trusted Fan Jin’s strength of character. Fan Jin had come up to him to argue on Jun Xie’s behalf, proving that Fan Jin saw Jun Xie as a person he would fight to defend. Secondly, with such vicious rumours swirling heatedly within the Zephyr Academy, Jun Xie’s days in the Zephyr Academy would not be easy even in the Beast Spirit faculty and without Fan Jin’s protection, Gu Li Sheng did not want to imagine what Jun Xie would be put through.

Hence, Gu Li Sheng had decided that he needed to let Fan Jin know the full picture.

Fan Jin had listened calmly at the start and became deeply shocked when Gu Li Sheng finished telling him the whole story. He stared wide eyed at Gu Li Sheng in incredulous disbelief and stuttered: “You..... you are saying..... Little Xie..... can improve..... the Spirit Healing technique! ! ?”

Great Heavens! ! What was he hearing!

Fan Jin knew clearly how precious the Spirit Healing technique was, and.....

Gu Li Sheng was actually telling him that Jun Xie had fully comprehended everything about the Spirit Healing technique within the time needed for a single stick of incense to burn out! He just could not believe his own ears!

“Yes, it still sounds absolutely unbelievable to me as I tell you this, but all that I have told you is the truth. This is a matter of gravest importance and before Jun Xie completes it, he would have to shoulder all the curses thrown at him and suffer under the injustice. I hope that you can take good care of him during this period and try your best to make his life in the academy a little

easier for him.” Gu Li Sheng pleaded with a sigh.

“Uncle Gu, you can be assured that I will not allow anyone to bully Jun Xie.” Fan Jin said, thumping his chest with confidence. He might not be able to assure Gu Li Sheng of much in other areas, but shielding Jun Xie was a task he was rather sure he could take up relatively easily.

“With your assurance, I am a bit more relieved.” Gu Li Sheng smiled weakly. It had only been through Fan Jin that he realised Jun Xie’s current predicament in the Zephyr Academy.

He really had not expected the Li Zi Mu that he had offhandedly picked would be the main instigator behind all this turmoil.

After knowing the full picture, all of Fan Jin’s doubts were cleared. Realising that Gu Li Sheng was the one who put Jun Xie into the Beast Spirit faculty, he had stated that he would definitely keep an eye out for Jun Xie there. After receiving a few more words of caution from Gu Li Sheng, Fan Jin left the Spirit Healer faculty.

Gu Li Sheng was deep in thought. Whereas, Li Zi Mu who was still caught up in glee at his new position, was completely oblivious to the fact that he had greatly angered the last person he should displease even the slightest in the Spirit Healer faculty. What awaited before him in the Zephyr Academy was not the fame and fortune he envisioned, but utter failure and an absolute crushing defeat.

Chapter 422: “Beast Spirit Faculty (1)”

That very afternoon, Jun Wu Xie put on the Beast Spirit faculty's jade emblem and was accompanied by Fan Jin as they made their way towards the Beast Spirit faculty's campus. Due to Fan Jin's presence, the other disciples did not dare to be overly brazen with their actions. They had only gathered together in groups whispering to each other while they pointed repeatedly at Jun Xie standing beside Fan Jin. However, what was being said among themselves could not be heard.

The junior and senior disciples in the Beast Spirit faculty were taught separately and after Fan Jin brought Jun Xie to the class for the newly admitted disciples, his face was etched with worry.

“Little Xie, I'll be going now. If anyone says anything unbearable, do not take it to heart. And if anyone bullies you, just tell me about it and I'll teach them a lesson.” Fan Jin said, shaking his fist visibly before the other disciples in the class. Fan Jin had always been known to be peace loving but in view of Jun Xie's predicament, he was prepared to defend Jun Xie even if his reputation was to be damaged.

He would only have to wait for the day that Jun Xie succeeded and their grievances would all be righted.

Jun Wu Xie looked at Fan Jin, and she suddenly thought that he was very similar to Qiao Chu before she nodded slightly.

Fan Jin spoke a while more before he left, his brow still creased in worry.

Fan Jin had just stepped away when the whole classroom, who had been wary of Fan Jin and had kept their silence, heard a voice suddenly exclaim loudly.

“I was just thinking who that was, and it turns out to be the Zephyr Academy's most shameless. So, you couldn't get into the

Spirit Healer faculty and have condescended yourself to come to the Beast Spirit faculty? I had thought that anyone who was thrown out of the Spirit Healer faculty were immediately expelled from the Zephyr Academy altogether. It seems I was wrong.” A youth with a sneering smile said while looking at Jun Wu Xie and she recognised him to be one of the youths from the group who had confronted her in the dining hall with Li Zi Mu.

“That depends on who you are talking about though. If you manage to grab on certain right connections, nothing is impossible. You are talking about the Headmaster’s son after all. He just has to open his mouth to plead a little and he would be able to keep anyone he wants within the Zephyr Academy! Didn’t you hear, Senior Fan had said it before all of us here that if any of us dared to bully Jun Xie, he will teach us a lesson you know?” Another youth quipped. Although neither of them intended to lay their hands on Jun Xie this time, the daggers they shot from their eyes were obvious for all to see.

And they were not afraid that Jun Xie would hear them either.

“I would advise the two of you to not speak too much about that. Mind you, that person has the backing of someone of great authority. They were able to retain someone who was supposed to be expelled from the Zephyr Academy that easily, maybe with a few more words from them, they would get us all expelled instead! It would be better to keep our mouths shut.”

The youths laughed as they spat out their venomous innuendos, and the atmosphere within the class grew more and more stifling.

There were tens of them in this batch of new disciples who were admitted and they were further split in two halves between the Beast Spirit and Weapon Spirit faculties. All the over thirty odd disciples in the class were admitted together with Jun Wu Xie.

And among all that number of disciples, not a single one among them held any kind intentions for the lone Jun Wu Xie.

The little black cat upon Jun Wu Xie's shoulders shot the ignorant youths a lazy glare.

[How childish.....]

Jun Wu Xie was completely unaffected by those insults and insinuated accusations and walked slowly towards a corner of the room to sit down, to wait for the Teacher to arrive.

For those three loudmouthed youths, they suddenly felt rather slighted when they could not incite any response from Jun Xie. But with Fan Jin's forewarning, they did not dare touch a hair on Jun Xie, and could only rope in the whole class to ostracise Jun Xie for them.

The Teacher for the new disciples admitted into the Beast Spirit faculty walked into the class. In a moment, the deafening noise in the classroom died down. All the new disciples sat up straight in their seats and ceased all their boisterous behaviour.

Qian Yuan He swept his stern glare around the class and finally spied a tiny lone figure in the corner, ostracised by all the other disciples in the class, and his brows furrowed deeply.

Chapter 423: “Beast Spirit Faculty (2)”

“Certain things that I have talked about earlier this morning, was supposed to have been finished and done with. But as we have new disciples who have just joined us for the afternoon class, I have no choice but to speak a bit more on it. When you are in the Beast Spirit faculty, we have rules that you have to adhere to. As a disciple of the Beast Spirit faculty, all of you will have to work hard to fight for the glory of the Beast Spirit faculty, and not go around stirring up controversies, or I will not hold myself back against those culprits. And, I am only a Teacher here that will provide you with guidance and am not your Master. In the Zephyr Academy, only the person who is willing to give you perpetual guidance till the day you leave the Zephyr Academy will be your Master.” Qian Yuan He’s eyes drifted to look at Jun Xie in the corner a few times as he spoke.

When he saw that Jun Xie was still expressionless like before, his frown grew deeper.

“I do not care if there are any disciples among you who have close relations with other Teachers, as once you are here in the Beast Spirit faculty, you are a disciple of the Beast Spirit faculty. If you think otherwise, it’s better you leave now, and not waste everybody else’s time. The Beast Spirit faculty has no need for such wastrels. If anyone intends to gain any advantages through any dishonest means, I can tell you now it would just be your own wishful thinking.”

Qian Yuan He might not have mentioned any names, but his words had been directed straight at Jun Xie, insinuating his lack of morals.

When the other youths heard Qian Yuan He, they cheered for their Teacher in their hearts.

This Teacher of theirs, had been known to be righteous and

unbending, and he absolutely despised people who resorted to underhanded means.

It seemed that Jun Xie had started on the wrong foot with the Teacher here, and had been blacklisted right from the start.

Being ostracised by the other disciples and earning the dislike of the Teacher, Jun Wu Xie's life in the academy was at its lowest. If it had been anyone else, they would not have been able to bear up under the swirling rumours and left this place of calamity. But Jun Wu Xie had not shown any reaction and just sat in the corner quietly.

Whatever people like these said, held no meaning to her. It could even be said that, besides the words that imparted to her knowledge of what she wanted to learn, Jun Wu Xie had totally shut out all these voices from her ears.

She would encase herself in her own little world.

After Qian Yuan He decided that he had given Jun Xie fair warning, his formal instruction on the way to train beast ring spirits started officially.

As someone who possessed a plant ring spirit, the method being taught that was meant for beast ring spirits was totally unsuitable to Jun Wu Xie's needs. She sat in the corner the whole afternoon and listened to Qian Yuan He's leisurely lecture before she realised it.

Between the different species of ring spirits, there were no areas that coincided with each other. She had initially intended to pick up some pointers and knowledge in the Zephyr Academy on ring spirits and spiritual power, but the result had greatly disappointed her.

All the things they were teaching, were of no use to her.

Having endured Qian Yuan He for the whole afternoon, Jun Wu Xie stood up and left immediately, paying no heed to Qian Yuan

He's darkened face with thick green veins showing visibly at his temples as his rage rose.

He saw before his eyes his most disliked disciple, suddenly walk out of the room, showing scant respect for him. Qian Yuan He could not do anything but leave the room with his face plastered with a sour expression. He made a mental note to remember to teach the tiny brat some basic manners and how to respect his teachers the next day.

But.....

With the exception of the very first day, Jun Wu Xie had never set foot into the Beast Spirit faculty again!

Jun Wu Xie went to Fan Jin and Fan Zhuo that very night and asked to borrow the use of one of the dwellings by the small quaint yard within the bamboo forest. She finally moved everything she had in the dormitory over and lived there completely.

Jun Wu Xie's soundless and swift actions shocked many people greatly. Besides having stunned those disciples and Teachers who had been waiting in the Beast Spirit faculty to give Jun Xie "a hard time", even Yin Yan found himself at a total loss for words for a long while as he stared at the completely empty bed space in the dormitory room.

The masses of people who had planned and plotted to make things difficult for Jun Xie suddenly found themselves without a target, their schemes completely foiled by one quick action from Jun Wu Xie.

Chapter 424: “Beast Spirit Faculty (3)”

In regards to Jun Wu Xie’s disappearing act, Qian Yuan He had gone to the Headmaster’s to complain a few times. But all of it was suppressed by Gu Li Sheng. Having known that Jun Xie did not turn up at the Beast Spirit faculty and had even moved out of the dormitory altogether brought a sense of great relief to Gu Li Sheng instead.

Jun Wu Xie stayed within the bamboo grove’s little yard and focused on her research of the Spirit Healing technique.

Having realised that the training of ring spirits for the other species were of no use to her, she had put all her energies into taking on the challenge of confronting the Spirit Healing technique. She wanted to complete the technique as soon as possible in order for the Snow Lotus to recover to its former glory.

Her life regressed back into a closed door affair, making her feel as if she had gone back to the days she was in the Lin Palace. In those days, she had not stepped through the pharmacy’s doors and had only stayed inside to cultivate her elixirs.

Jun Xie might have “disappeared” from sight in the Zephyr Academy, but the rumours and slander surrounding her had not dissipated one bit and continued to swirl.

The set rules in the Zephyr Academy did not allow disciples to skip classes with a good reason and Jun Xie had not appeared in class for almost half a month. Qian Yuan He’s trips to the Headmaster’s had increased in frequency but had still been to no avail. Nevertheless, news on the matter suddenly spread among the disciples and no one knew from where the rumours had started from.

First, he had tried to steal the position in the Spirit Healer faculty from others, then he had seen himself so self important that he totally disregarded the Teacher in his Beast Spirit faculty class, and

now he had broken the academy rules, but Jun Xie was still not expelled from the Zephyr Academy.

The infractions that Jun Xie had committed were getting from bad to worse. Jun Wu Xie herself did not realise it, but the infamy that the name, Jun Xie, carried within the Zephyr Academy at that moment, made her an undisputed “celebrity” throughout the whole campus.

And that infamy had dragged Fan Jin into the mud together, along with Jun Xie.

It was because of Fan Jin’s protectiveness of Jun Xie on all those occasions in the past that led everyone to think it was all due to Fan Jin influence that Jun Xie was able to still remain a disciple of the Zephyr Academy despite all her grave transgressions. Everyone accused Fan Jin of exerting undue influence onto the Headmaster with his unique position, forcing the academy of retaining Jun Xie. Although all the disciples did not dare to get into a direct confrontation with Fan Jin, but behind him, they had lost the adoration and respect for him, and when speaking of Fan Jin, they would only clamp their mouths tightly shut and refuse to comment anything about him.

Fan Jin was aware but he never mentioned it to anyone. He went to the bamboo glade for his meals as usual and occasionally share interesting stories on the things happening within the academy with Jun Xie and Fan Zhuo, but he never spoke about himself, shouldering the whole burden by himself secretly.

On this day, Fan Jin had just finished with his training and he made himself forget all the unfriendly stares directed at him, smiling to himself as he left.

A short distance away, Senior Ning walked out from behind some trees, and standing beside her was the gloomy Yin Yan.

“Have you managed to find out where Jun Xie has disappeared to?” Senior Ning asked with a frown on her face. She had intended

to make use of Jun Xie to take down Fan Jin, but Jun Xie had only appeared in the Beast Spirit faculty for half a day and had completely disappeared thereafter, making it impossible to carry out her plan.

Yin Yan made an agonized face and shook his head.

Senior Ning showed her displeasure on her face and asked: “Has there been any situations with that Li Zi Mu?”

Yin Yan replied: “Li Zi Mu, he..... isn’t doing well in the Spirit Healer faculty.”

“How can it be?” Senior Ning asked in surprise. Li Zi Mu was the only disciple that Gu Li Sheng accepted this year, how could he be doing badly?

“It is not Master’s fault. Master has been very patient with him and often carries out a one on one instruction with him. Master has even given Li Zi Mu books that we have never seen before to revise but Li Zi Mu does not seem to have the aptitude for Spirit Healing. It has been two weeks and he can’t even perform a spiritual power transformation.” As Yin Yan shared his observations, his eyes somehow seemed to shine.

Chapter 425: “Trust”

Both Senior Ning and Gu Li Sheng had placed importance on Li Zi Mu and that had made Yin Yan rather jealous. And when he saw how badly Li Zi Mu was clumsily fumbling through his tasks everyday, he could not help but smile in joy.

Li Zi Mu was just thrash and would never amount to anything.

“How did it turn out like that?” Senior Ning asked, her brow furrowed. Things were obviously not moving as she had planned.

Over the past two weeks, she had been rather cordial with Li Zi Mu, as she had intended to rope him in. But if his potential did not meet up to her expectations, she would have wasted all that effort.

“Observe him for another two weeks. If things does not improve, let me know. I had intended to ask my father to put Li Zi Mu under my charge to mentor, but if he turns out to be absolutely useless, then I have no need for such trash.” Senior Ning complained in displeasure. All the seniors can take in up to two junior disciples to be under their charge and she had already given the first spot to Yin Yan. She had thought about taking in Li Zi Mu to fill up the second spot but it seemed that she would have to reconsider it again.

“Rest assured, Senior Ning. I will close a close eye on Li Zi Mu’s progress.” Yin Yan answered with his head lowered, to hide the wicked smile playing across his lips.

Senior Ning waved her hand, feeling slightly annoyed.

.....

Time passed and days went by, Jun Wu Xie had stayed within the quaint little hut within the bamboo grove for a month. Over the past month, the rumours within the Zephyr Academy had not dwindled over time but had instead intensified, but Jun Wu Xie was not aware of it.

After a whole month's research, Jun Wu Xie had finally been able to understand where the inadequacies in the Spirit Healing technique lay when one's spiritual power was transformed. Gu Li Sheng's Spirit Healing merely transforms one's spiritual power into spirit energy to mend up injured ring spirits. But Jun Wu Xie had discovered that even without going through the transformation of one's spiritual power, the energy could be directly applied to mend a ring spirit instead. Although the speed of the healing was slower, but it completely removed the major disadvantage of the excessive loss of one's spiritual power in Gu Li Sheng's technique.

Jun Wu Xie had experimented it on the Snow Lotus a few times and found that the Snow Lotus' lifeforce had been getting stronger and stronger over the past few days. Its withered petals had now grown dense and lush just like before, and Jun Wu Xie could distinctly feel the familiar spirit energy flowing out from the Snow Lotus.

She believed that in another two weeks, the Snow Lotus would be able to achieve a complete recovery.

That day, after Jun Wu Xie had completed her healing of the Snow Lotus, another idea popped into Jun Wu Xie's head. In the past one month that she had stayed within the bamboo grove, though she had not stepped out of her room much, she had nevertheless silently observed Fan Zhuo's health condition. It was just as the rumours had said outside, Fan Zhuo's weak body was near expiration and the amount of elixirs he swallowed were more than the amount of food he ate. Although that might just forcibly sustain his body to keep him alive a little longer, but medicine and elixirs were nevertheless still drugs, and would still in part be poison to the body. The copious amount of elixirs he inhaled daily would cause a certain amount of damage to his body as well.

The negative effects would not be visible in the early stages, but when the effects accumulated over time, it would render Fan

Zhuo's body to become just an empty shell.

Jun Wu Xie walked towards Fan Zhuo's little hut and stood before the tightly latched door. She was just about to raise her hand to knock when Ah Jing's voice sounded from inside.

“Young Master, is the Jun Xie mentioned in the rumours outside, the same Young Master Jun staying here with us? You are not aware, but everyone out there is cursing the Elder Young Master viciously all because of him.....”

“Ah Jing, what is exactly the matter with you?” Fan Zhuo's voice asked right after.

Ah Jing told Fan Zhuo everything he had heard about Jun Xie from the day he was admitted till now, and the tone in his voice was heavily tinged with reproach.

“How would the Elder Young Master be capable of committing favouritism and accepting of cronyism? The Elder Young Master is the nicest and most righteous person under the skies. I had never seen that Young Master Jun would commit such despicable acts. It is no wonder he does not go to the academy at all. It must be because he had stirred up so much controversy and was not able to remain in the academy.”

Chapter 426: “Malady or Poison (1)”

Ah Jing was about to continue when Fan Zhuo’s voice interrupted him.

“Ah Jing! I do not want to hear you speak anymore about this in future. I trust my brother and I trust Little Xie. The gossip that comes out of the mouths of others cannot compare with I can see with my own two eyes and hear with my own ears here everyday. Throughout the period that Little Xie had lived here, had he ever bothered anyone in anyway? Don’t tell me you do not know where those tonics that had suddenly appeared in the kitchen out of nowhere were from.” Fan Zhuo said, as he looked at Ah Jing, his always gentle face showing a rare moment of displeasure.

Jun Xie might not like to talk much and did not get along easily with people. But that did not mean that he was a person that harboured ulterior motives.

After Jun Wu Xie had moved into the bamboo grove, Ah Jing would often find precious tonics in the kitchen that suddenly appeared out of thin air. Those highly expensive things would often be stuffed somewhere in the kitchen and placed out in the open like common vegetables. Ah Jing had initially thought that the Headmaster had arranged for people to deliver them to the bamboo grove and had asked the guard that delivered things to them daily, but the guard had only told Ah Jing he had never seen those things before.

Ah Jing had then told Fan Zhuo about the queer happenings and Fan Zhuo had immediately correctly guessed the identity of the person responsible for it.

Those things must have been secretly left in the kitchen by Jun Xie. Although Jun Xie always carried a cold expression on his face, his heart was however warm.

Ah Jing could not find any words to rebuke Fan Zhuo’s

reasoning. If he had not heard those rumours circulating throughout the whole academy, Ah Jing had actually liked the little Young Master Jun. But when the rumours began to be heard time and time again, many began to believe those rumours to be the truth. And when he heard that the Elder Young Master had been mercilessly slandered and irrecoverably wronged due to his association with Jun Xie, Ah Jing had immediately turned the blame onto Jun Xie.

“I will take it as you had not said all these before, and I do not want Little Xie to hear them.” Fan Zhuo said in reproach.

Ah Jing head was lowered and he said softly: “But the Elder Young Master.....”

“If my brother doesn’t even mind, I do not care to hear about it as well. My incapacitated body is a burden to people when others speak about it. If rumours from others are to be believed, shouldn’t my father and brother have thrown me out right from the beginning and leave me to fend for myself?” Fan Zhuo asked persistently.

Ah Jing shook his head vehemently when he heard that.

Fan Zhuo let out a big sigh and was about to give Ah Jing some instructions when his face was suddenly covered in cold sweat. His pale face turned green and he clutched at the clothes at his chest tightly before falling forward onto the table.

“Young Master! Young Master!” Ah Jing was in a fluster.

A loud crash sounded!

The tightly latched door was suddenly kicked open and before Ah Jing could recover, he saw the figure of Jun Xie rushing in like a whirlwind, straight towards Fan Zhuo, who had fallen unconscious, and immediately carrying him onto the bed.

All four of Fan Zhuo’s limbs were twitching as he lay on the bed and his mouth was tightly closed. The lips on his mouth were

turning from purple to become greenish and his face was creased in a tight frown. Ah Jing was about to cry as he stood rooted to the spot, unable to move.

Jun Wu Xie immediately took Fan Zhuo's pulse and when she felt the pulse under her fingers, her brow immediately furrowed.

In the past few days, she had accidentally come across Fan Zhuo within the small yard and she had taken Fan Zhuo's pulse discreetly as she had some thoughts about his health condition. Although the pulse had been weak then, it had been nothing like the chaotic pulse she felt now from him. The chaos in the pulse had initially seemed to have been brought about by the onset of Fan Zhuo's illness, but if one were to look deeper, they would find that the chaos was due to external influences that had suddenly stirred all this up.

It was not Fan Zhuo's malady acting up, but an effect brought on by poison!

Jun Wu Xie was suddenly reminded of Mo Qian Yuan. Fan Zhuo's pulse now had felt exactly the same as Mo Qian Yuan's had in the beginning. Although Mo Qian Yuan had similarly been poisoned, but his body had been in a much better condition than Fan Zhuo. Fan Zhuo's severely weakened body might not be able to withstand the torment the poison would inflict on it.

Chapter 427: “Malady or Poison (2)”

“Young Master Jun! Please help find the Elder Young Master and tell him that the Young Master had fallen ill. Please.” Ah Jing pleaded with Jun Wu Xie, tears running down his face.

Jun Wu Xie shook her head and pulled out the silver needles she always carried around with her. She told Ah Jing in a cold voice: “Fetch some hot water and warm wine.”

“What?” Ah Jing was stunned and did not move. He suddenly recovered and saw that Jun Xie was holding silver needles longer than his fingers and was about to administer them on Fan Zhuo. Shock shook him and he immediately jumped onto Jun Xie, pulling back on the hand that was about to administer the needles onto Fan Zhuo.

“What are you doing to my Young Master!”

At times like this, Jun Xie was not running to Fan Jin to get people to help and was going to use those needles on Fan Zhuo! ? All those rumours and gossip that he had heard suddenly came rushing into mind and those eyes that had been looking at Jun Xie suddenly changed.

“If you dare to harm my Young Master in any way, I will not let you off!”

Jun Wu Xie’s brows furrowed as she looked at Ah Jing’s eyes that were filled with hatred, and whispered: “Little black.”

Just as the words came out of Jun Wu Xie’s mouth, the little black cat that had been lying on Jun Wu Xie’s shoulders suddenly jumped at Ah Jing, and the tiny body morphed and grew in midair, turning suddenly into a massive black beast!

“ARGH! !” Ah Jing was pinned to the ground by the black beast and he screamed out in terror.

“Quiet.” Jun Wu Xie said with a frown.

The black beast opened its great jaws and held Ah Jing by the neck. Ah Jing was so terrified that he did not dare utter another sound.

Silence finally fell in the room and Jun Wu Xie worked her needles on Fan Zhuo immediately.

Ah Jing stared wordlessly as he watched Jun Wu Xie stick those long silver needles into Fan Zhuo's body. When he saw the needles prick the skin and its length disappearing into the body, Ah Jing's eyes became red. All the gossips and rumours about Jun Xie whispered into his ears repeatedly and suddenly took root in his mind. Fear crept into his heart. Had they allowed a wolf in sheep's clothing into their midst?

Jun Wu Xie did not have the time to bother with what Ah Jing was thinking. Fan Zhuo's body was in the worst of conditions. She suspected that his body carried not only a deep rooted malady but that elements of induced poison were also present.

But she was rather puzzled. She had taken Fan Zhuo's pulse some time earlier and she had not detected any traces of poison in Fan Zhuo's body. But the poison had hit Fan Zhuo so strongly today. Was it mere coincidence or was this caused by someone's hand?

Jun Wu Xie worked to stabilise Fan Zhuo's veins and arteries on one hand and was juggling to extract the poison from his body with the silver needles on the other hand. The colour of the blood that flowed out from Fan Zhuo's body made Jun Wu Xie raise an eyebrow in query.

The colour of Fan Zhuo's blood was extremely light, unlike the blood of a normal person. And the smell of the blood was rather faint as it dripped from a silver needle drop by drop. The blood did not look to be tainted by poison and this did not match Jun Wu Xie's initial diagnosis.

Could it be that poison was not used?

Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow in thought and her hands moved endlessly. Fan Zhuo's body had been very weak all this time and it was already a miracle that he had lasted this long. With this sudden seizure, it had almost depleted everything his weak body had left in the first place. Fan Zhuo's lifeforce was leaving his body fast and if left alone, he would not live past two hours!

It was not the time to get caught up with the strange signs on Fan Zhuo's body, but to focus on keeping him alive.

Jun Wu Xie's eyes suddenly glimmered with a frosty light. It was always in situations like this, that she was fighting tooth and nail against Death himself to gain every second she could for her patient, that made Jun Wu Xie's blood boil and endlessly excited her.

With the twelve silver needles, she set the foundation, to protect Fan Zhuo's main heart artery. She used another seven silver needles to seal his acupressure points to contain Fan Zhuo's weakening breaths. Gripping her needles firmly, Jun Wu Xie's hands flew after stabilising Fan Zhuo's condition and embarked on her long battle, fighting for the same man, as she stared at Death straight in the eyes.

Chapter 428: “Malady or Poison (3)”

Fan Zhuo’s body was exceptionally weak and would not be able to hold up under overly intensive treatment. But the afflictions within his body were nevertheless very violent and if not suppressed by strong medicine, he would soon cease to breathe. Jun Wu Xie employed her own technique, the Devil’s Heart Needles to retain the last gasps of his breath.

The technique was developed by Jun Wu Xie herself when she had been isolated from the world for more than a decade. Its implementation was highly invasive but its effect were just as astounding. This technique when employed through Jun Wu Xie’s needles would forcibly incite a person’s life force to flare for a period. Although that might just retain a person’s life, this technique could only be employed on a person three times throughout his life and every time it was used, the person’s lifespan would be shortened by a decade. If the body were to undergo through the technique more than three times, then, that person wouldn’t be saved even if the gods descended.

The technique was highly detrimental to a person’s body and Jun Wu Xie avoided employing it if she could help it. But faced with Fan Zhuo condition now, besides using the Devil’s Heart Needles to gain the precious time she needed, she could not think of any other way.

Under the seventeen life preserving needles, Fan Zhuo’s life was kept from ebbing away and that would allow Jun Wu Xie the highly precious time she needed to execute other purging and healing methods to drag Fan Zhuo out from Death’s gates.

A snake’s gall immersed in poison was pushed into Fan Zhuo’s mouth. The snake’s gall contained lethal poison and if not for the Devil’s Heart Needles protection, Fan Zhuo’s body would have been caught in a seizure and he would have died immediately upon swallowing it. But the poison from snake gall brought about

another effect in this instance whereby it greatly stirred Fan Zhuo's deep seated malady into a frenzied state. Fan Zhuo's body began to tremble violently and blood formed into a drop through the pores on his skin. In a moment, Fan Zhuo was suddenly covered in his own blood! His body twisted and turned and his arched body was like a bow stretched to its limit, and it seemed like it could snap at anytime.

Ah Jing stared in horror as he saw what Fan Zhuo was going through and his heart winced in pain. He no longer cared about being inhibited by black beast and he struggled while he shouted out: "Jun Xie! You will die a thousand deaths! My Young Master trusted you so much! And you would still do this to him! If anything happens to the Young Master, I'll still come back and haunt you even when I turn into a ghost!"

Ah Jing's eyes were all red as he stared venomously at Jun Wu Xie, looking like he would have liked nothing better than to tear her apart right at that moment.

The black beast's fang scratched Ah Jing's neck slightly and blood flowed down his neck. But Ah Jing had not noticed it and just continued to shout.

"Quiet." Jun Wu Xie said coldly. She could not afford to be distracted now as Fan Zhuo's delicate situation called for her full attention.

The black beast sensed Jun Wu Xie's perplexity and it raised its paw and swiped it against Ah Jing's head.

The next moment, the screaming Ah Jing fell over in a dead faint.

And silence claimed the room once more.

The black beast turned back into a cat and jumped up onto the bed to silently observe Jun Wu Xie as she conduct Fan Zhuo's treatment, a face a mask of intense concentration.

The most difficult maladies to fully treat and root out completely were those that had their illness accompanying them all the while straight from birth. Not many ways existed that could fully mend such inborn deficiencies. Fan Zhuo had been born with a weak constitution and his body had been mainly sustained by medicine and elixirs over a long period and their side effects had been deeply ingrained all the way into his bones. The sudden seizure had shown all the signs of Fan Zhuo being poisoned and the deep seated side effects accumulated over the long years of his high intake of medicines had erupted together. Under the successive bouts of trauma inflicted upon a person's body, even a normal person might not survive under the torment and Fan Zhuo's situation was made all the more dire.

“Jun Xie! What are you doing! ?” Having just completed his training, Fan Jin had made his way over here to sponge a good meal off his brother. The moment he had stepped into the small yard within the bamboo grove, he had detected a faint smell of blood. Worried for his brother's condition, he had rushed into the room and the moment he had pushed the door open, he saw Ah Jing lying in a heap, motionless on the ground, and bleeding from the neck. His dear younger brother was on the bed, covered in blood, and his body was badly contorted as violent spasms rocked him and Jun Xie was just staring coldly at his side.

At that moment, Fan Jin's mind exploded!

Chapter 429: “Malady or Poison (4)”

One had fainted and another had suddenly appeared. Jun Wu Xie's hand that was still on Fan Zhuo's pulse suddenly had green veins showing vividly against her fair skin.

“If you don't want him to die, do as I say.” Jun Wu Xie could not spare the time to explain anything to Fan Jin. She decided to take a gamble, on whether Fan Jin trusted her enough.

“You.....” Fan Jin stared at the unconscious Ah Jing and turned his eyes to Fan Zhuo whose body was still rocked by violent spasms and a great struggle showed in his eyes.

Everything before his eyes signalled undeniable danger signs in his mind as no matter how anyone looked at the scene in front of him, they would only think that Jun Xie was delivering harm to Fan Zhuo.

But.....

“Just tell me what and I'll carry it out.” A tiny voice in Fan Jin told him that he would not go wrong if he listened to Jun Xie.

“Hot water, warm wine.” Jun Wu Xie lacked the ability to split herself and she could not afford to take one step away from Fan Zhuo at that moment.

Fan Jin did not hesitate and immediately turned to carry out the tasks.

The little black cat sat quietly at the side as it watched Fan Jin's quick actions, and it swished its tail lazily through the air.

[He is at least more sensible, my mistress had not expended so much effort to save your brother in vain.]

After a while, Fan Jin had gotten what Jun Wu Xie had asked for ready and brought it into the room. Jun Wu Xie ignored him completely, directing all her energies on treating Fan Zhuo.

Fan Jin placed the things he had prepared on one side and he found the room so quiet he could hear his own heartbeat. He bent down to check on Ah Jing's injuries and found that Ah Jing was only bleeding at the neck from a scratch before having fainted. He saw that Ah Jing's life was in no danger and he carried Ah Jing out and put him into another room. Fan Jin came back after that and just stood quietly at one corner of the bed, watching Jun Xie carry out the treatment for Fan Zhuo.

As he observed further, Fan Jin was utterly shocked. He had not really thought carefully about what Jun Xie had wanted to do, but when he saw Jun Xie repeatedly feeding elixirs to Fan Zhuo and incessantly applying medicated cream on Fan Zhuo's acupuncture points, his expression became one of shock.

"Little Xie..... You are carrying out treatment for Little Zhuo?" Fan Jin asked cautiously.

"Shut up." Jun Wu Xie shot Fan Jin a cold glance and Fan Jin immediately quieted himself.

Many years later, every time that Fan Jin recalled this scene on this very day, he would always feel torn between tears and laughter. He had actually left the fate of his gravely ill younger brother in the hands of a fourteen year old youth. He would still wonder in disbelief at his totally irrational decision that fateful day.

The spasms that wrecked at Fan Zhuo's body stopped after a long while. His eyes were tightly closed and his deathly pale face was contorted in agony. Jun Wu Xie used the hot water that Fan Jin brought in to clean the blood off Fan Zhuo, and then she poured the warm wine down Fan Zhuo's throat.

Moments later, the spasms started to wreck at Fan Zhuo once again!

"Hold him down." Jun Wu Xie stepped back and told Fan Jin.

Fan Jin hurried to the side of the bed and his eyes were pained as he looked at his brother. He stretched out his hand to hold down Fan Zhuo's shoulders to prevent him from struggling too much.

“Pffftt!”

A dark black liquid suddenly spewed forth from Fan Zhuo's mouth and it sprayed heavily all over Fan Jin.

The dark black liquid carried an obnoxious odour and Fan Jin almost lost consciousness from the sudden onslaught to his sense of smell. Nevertheless, Fan Jin held his brother down determinedly as he looked on anxiously as Fan Zhuo continued to spew out the black liquid.

“Lie sideways.” Jun Wu Xie voice sounded out.

Fan Jin understood and immediately turned Fan Zhuo's body to make him lie on his side at the edge of the bed.

Fan Zhuo continued to vomit but the spasms were gradually dying down and the amount of filth coming out of his mouth was also lessening. When Fan Zhuo had nothing else left for him to vomit out, Jun Wu Xie gestured with her hand and said: “Let him lie down properly.”

Fan Jin immediately complied and he saw that Fan Zhuo's complexion looked visibly better than just now. The green and purple hue on his face had completely disappeared.

Chapter 430: “Malady or Poison (5)”

“Little Xie! Little Zhuo’s complexion.....” Fan Jin turned to look at Jun Xie, a big smile almost splitting across his face. But saw noticed Jun Xie was looking back at him, with utmost disdain in his eyes.

Fan Jin’s expression became one of bewilderment. He took one step forward, but Jun Xie hurriedly retreated a step as well.

“Don’t come near me.” Jun Wu Xie’s eyes were icily cold.

Fan Jin’s heart winced and he suddenly remembered the suspicions he had held against Jun Xie when he first opened the door earlier. He was suddenly overcome in guilt.

He could visibly see Fan Zhuo’s complexion improving before his eyes and no matter how ignorant he was in the field of medicine, Fan Jin knew that everything that Jun Xie had done earlier was to save Fan Zhuo’s life, but he had actually allowed himself to lay suspicion on Jun Xie’s intentions.

“Little Xie, I am really sorry. I did not mean to doubt you, but when I opened that door, and my eyes were met with such a scene, I could not react in time. I am really really sorry.” Fan Jin apologised sincerely as he did not want Jun Xie to look at him with those eyes filled with such derision.

Jun Wu Xie frowned, not understanding why Fan Jin was apologising, and ignored what he had said totally.

“Dirty.” Jun Wu Xie however was highly put off by the filth on Fan Jin and she pinched her nose while she pointed a finger at Fan Jin and uttered just that single word.

It finally dawned on Fan Jin and he looked down at himself before he realised he was covered in the smelly black liquid that Fan Zhuo had vomited out earlier. He had been overcome by shock and had not paid any notice to the pungent acrid odour emanating

from him. And after Jun Xie had pointed it out, his numbed sense of smell suddenly came back and when the highly offensive odour wafted into his nose, Fan Jin suddenly gagged and almost vomited on the spot.

He covered his mouth in a hurry and gestured with his other hand, before he shot out of the room in a flash.

The next moment, the sound of someone vomiting outside could be heard coming in through the open doorway and then the trickling of water.

Jun Wu Xie's frown stayed on her face as she looked at Fan Zhuo, and all the filth at the side of the bed. But she finally still stepped forward to check on Fan Zhuo's condition.

The chaos within his body had finally subsided but Fan Zhuo was still frighteningly weak. He might have pulled through today, but dragged down with that weak body, he would not last much too long.

For Fan Zhuo to embark on a journey towards complete recovery, his treatment would need to start from the base by nursing his body's constitution, and that would not be something that was achieved overnight.

After Fan Jin had cleaned himself up and changed into a new set of clothes, he came back into the room. He saw Jun Xie standing by the bed, taking Fan Zhuo's pulse and his eyes suddenly turned gentle.

Jun Xie had treated him with utter disdain for being dirty and Jun Xie was now standing at Little Zhuo's bedside. And Fan Jin knew the amount of filth by the bed was a lot more than what he had been covered in earlier.

"Thank you." Fan Jin said just two simple words, but those words truly came out from the bottom of his heart.

"No need." Jun Wu Xie turned to look at Fan Jin. She had

managed to bring Fan Zhuo through today, but Fan Zhuo's body was still extremely weak. Even if she intended to begin nursing his body, it would have to wait a while as Fan Zhuo had just come through a trauma and his body would not be able to bear up any other burden.

“How is Little Zhuo now?” Fan Jin asked.

“Fine for now, but if this continues, he will not live past a year.” Jun Wu Xie said softly. She added subsequently: “Feeding him and elixirs now would only hasten his death.”

Fan Jin's eyes widened as he stared at Jun Xie in shock.

“Wh..... What! ?” Elixirs would kill his Fan Zhuo! ?

“His body will not be able to take it.” Jun Wu Xie almost rolled her eyes at Fan Jin, she did not have the patience to try to explain to a someone who was an ignoramus in medicine the basic knowledge that all medicine contained elements of poison.

“Then..... What can we do? Father had wanted to bring Little Zhuo to the Qing Yun Clan, but the Qing Yun Clan has disappeared!” Fan Jin's head hung low, his eyes filled with frustration.

Chapter 431: “Malady or Poison (6)”

Jun Wu Xie looked at Fan Jin and said without emotion: “It wouldn’t have made a difference even if they did not disappear.”

If she was finding it bothersome to treat, the Qing Yun Clan would not even know where to start.

The Qing Yun Clan’s inadequate knowledge in medicine amounted to absolutely nothing in Jun Wu Xie’s eyes.

“Huh?” Fan Jin exclaimed, taken aback by Jun Xie’s reply.

“If you believe me, let me treat your little brother.” Jun Wu Xie said suddenly.

Fan Jin did not hesitate when he replied: “Absolutely! But.....” Fan Jin’s voice trailed off.

“Little Zhuo’s health condition had always been handled by our father. I will need to speak with him about this first.”

Jun Wu Xie nodded.

Fan Jin broke into a smile immediately: “I did not think you would possess such skills! You have helped Little Zhuo greatly and I do not know how to thank you.”

He had initially agreed to mentor Jun Xie due to Gu Li Sheng’s request. He had stoically defended the little boy thereafter because he had sincerely grown to like the fiercely independent kid. Jun Xie might possess a rather cold personality, but he was not difficult to get along with. He was forthright and did not play mind games or resort to trickery. He had developed a genuine fondness for Jun Xie’s uncomplicated character.

And now, Jun Xie had saved Fan Zhuo, and that made Fan Jin very grateful.

“Rent.” Jun Wu Xie said simply.

Fan Jin paused a long while before he realised what Jun Xie had

meant.

“You’re saying you saved Little Zhuo because he allowed you to stay here?”

His dear little brother’s life in exchange for rent.....

Fan Jin did not know whether to laugh or cry at Jun Xie’s logic. Jun Xie was undoubtedly a highly intelligent kid, but the ignorance he displayed sometimes really made him want to laugh out loud.

Jun Wu Xie nodded, her face earnestly serious.

Fan Jin could not hold it in anymore and he burst out in laughter. He raised his hand to pat Jun Xie on the shoulder as tears formed in his eyes.

“Little Xie, you’re really something. It’s really dirty here. Let me clean it all up and you go rest a little.” He knew that Jun Xie abhorred the filth and smell in here and Fan Jin shooed Jun Xie out of the room to go rest.

Jun Wu Xie did not feel bashful in the least and immediately took him up on the offer and left carrying the little black cat in her arms as soon as he said that.

As the eldest son of the Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy, Fan Jin was cleaning up a room for the first time in his life. He stared at the mess and filth a long while but lowered his head in determination to take on the unfamiliar task ahead.

When the room was relatively cleaned, Fan Jin was totally exhausted and had just slumped into a chair to take a drink of water when he suddenly heard a desperate screaming coming from behind him which made him jump up in fright.

He turned his head and saw Ah Jing standing at the door in fury, holding a kitchen cleaver in his hand.

They stared at each other and both of them were rendered

speechless by what they saw.

“Ah Jing! What are you doing! ?” Fan Jin was still in shock as he looked at Ah Jing. He did not know the usually soft spoken and submissive Ah Jing had such a maniacal side to him.

“El..... Elder Young Master.....” Ah Jing stuttered when he saw Fan Jin in the room. The forcibly summoned courage that had sustained Ah Jing dissipated completely out of him when his eyes saw Fan Jin and he suddenly slumped onto the ground while the cleaver in his hand clattered noisily on the floor.

“Elder Young Master! You’ve come here at last..... That..... that Jun Xie was trying to kill the Young Master! Elder Young Master! You have to save the Young Master!” Ah Jing was in tears as he knelt by Fan Jin’s feet, crying pleadingly.

Fan Jin did not know how to react and before he could open his mouth to say anything, a small figure had appeared at the door.

Jun Wu Xie leaned lazily against the doorway, her arms crossed over her chest, as she stared coldly at the bawling figure grabbing at Fan Jin’s leg.

“Little Xie, why are you not resting?” Fan Jin asked, turning his head to look at Jun Wu Xie.

Jun Wu Xie bit her lip in impatience and simply said:

“Noisy.”

Chapter 432: “Malady or Poison (7)”

Ah Jing trembled as a chill ran up his spine upon hearing a voice say “noisy”. He turned to look towards the doorway and when his eyes saw the figure of Jun Xie, he started screaming.

“Elder Young Master! Elder Young Master!” Ah Jing was so frightened he could not say anything else.

“Ah Jing!” Fan Jin raised his voice to be heard over the screaming. He picked Ah Jing up with one hand and carried Ah Jing to go beside Fan Zhuo’s bed.

The shaking Ah Jing saw Fan Zhuo lying quietly on the bed and noticed that his complexion had returned to normal. Fan Zhuo did not seem to be in any discomfort and looked to be peacefully asleep. Ah Jing pointed at Fan Zhuo and said to Fan Jin: “I saw it..... I saw Jun Xie use..... use very long needles and stabbed them into Young Master’s body.”

“Ah Jing, Little Zhuo is doing fine. Little Xie was giving him treatment earlier and you misunderstood.” Fan Jin said with a sigh. Ah Jing was extremely loyal to Fan Zhuo and cared for his little brother well. But he wasn’t too bright and had a one track mind.

Ah Jing was quiet as he stared still frightened, at Jun Xie and turned his eyes back to Fan Zhuo. Finally, he went to the side of Fan Zhuo’s bed and felt the side of his neck for a pulse. After making sure that Fan Zhuo was alright, he turned to looking at Jun Xie, still not entirely convinced.

Jun Wu Xie had remained leaning against the door frame and her eyes were still cold. She was not displeased, but neither was there joy.

“Elder Young Master, how old is Master Jun? How would he know medicine?” Ah Jing continued to grumble.

Fan Jin's brow furrowed suddenly.

"Quiet. I want to sleep." Jun Wu Xie did not have the patience to carry on with Ah Jing and curtly threw down her warning before turning and walking back to her room.

That intensive treatment had taken quite a bit out of her and she needed to sort out her thoughts a little bit before she can piece together the various clues she had gathered from Fan Zhuo's body.

After Jun Xie left, Fan Jin stared at Ah Jing with a look of disapproval.

"Ah Jing, what are you saying? I saw with my own eyes how Little Xie had saved my little brother. Do you think I am blind?" Fan Jin reprimanded Ah Jing with a stern face.

Ah Jing looked at Fan Jin looking like he had been victimised.

"If Young Master's illness can be so easily treated, it wouldn't have dragged on till now. I know Elder Young Master likes Master Jun, but the Young Master is your brother! The Young Master has suffered so much over the years and had been treated by so many top doctors but his condition still had not improved. Jun Xie is so young, how can he possibly be able to cure the Young Master? I have heard everything. That Jun Xie has an extremely bad reputation in the academy and he had even dragged our Elder Young Master down together with him. Elder Young Master, you are not related to that Jun Xie in any way, why do you defend him so much?"

Saying that a young fourteen year old kid could cure someone when countless top doctors had been helpless was the biggest joke he had ever heard.

Fan Jin told Ah Jing in anger: "I do not want any of those words to spew forth from your mouth again. Whoever Jun Xie is, I will judge for myself and I do not need anyone to tell me otherwise. If you think you have too much time on your hands here, I can get

my father to send you back to the academy, so that you won't have to concern yourself with all these rumours."

Ah Jing panicked upon hearing Fan Jin's words.

"Elder Young Master, I don't want to go! I want to take care of Young Master! The Young Master is my saviour! My life belongs to the Young Master!"

Ah Jing had started crying once again as he pleaded.

"Alright. There is nothing here for you to do now. Go get some rest." Fan Jin was afraid Ah Jing's crying would disturb Jun Xie's rest and he hurriedly dismissed Ah Jing with a frown on his face.

Ah Jing left reluctantly and an idea formed in his head.

The Elder Young Master was being too nice to Jun Xie and that had dragged the Young Master together into the muck. If this was allowed to continue, who knew what Jun Xie would eventually do to harm the two Young Masters? He decided that he needed to go see the Headmaster and tell him everything, to have the Headmaster drive the scheming Jun Xie out of the bamboo grove!

Chapter 433: “A Stubborn Fool (1)”

As he stared at Fan Zhuo sleeping peacefully, Fan Jin’s mind was in a whirl. The Qing Yun Clan is gone and Fan Zhuo’s illness was worsening. Father had invited the best doctors here but they had not been able to cure Fan Zhuo. If things continued on like this.....

Fan Jin’s fists were tightly clenched. Fan Jin checked and when he saw that Fan Zhuo was still sound asleep, he suddenly got up and made his way towards the Headmaster’s office in the Zephyr Academy.

As Fan Jin stood before the door, he was about to knock when he heard Ah Jing’s voice coming out from behind it.

“Headmaster Sir, please go see Young Master at once. If we allow Jun Xie to continue tormenting the Young Master, I’m afraid he will.....”

Fan Jin’s heart sank, and he kicked the door open with a resounding crash.

“Ah Jing! Who allowed you to come here and spout such nonsense! ?” Fan Jin stared angrily at Ah Jing in disbelief who was standing in the office with red rimmed eyes. He had not expected that Ah Jing would actually come straight to his father to carry such tall tales barely moments after he had scolded Ah Jing.

“El..... Elder Young Master.....” Ah Jing did not expect to see Fan Jin here and his face was a complete panic.

The elderly man seated behind the desk had dark hair streaked with white at the sides, and his face was benign and kindly. When he saw Fan Jin at the door after it opened with a loud crash, his expression registered surprise.

“What brings you here, my son?” The Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy, Fan Qi, asked gently. He was Fan Jin’s and Fan Zhuo’s father and he held the highest authority in the whole Zephyr

Academy.

“Father, please do not believe a word of what Ah Jing is telling you. I know Jun Xie better than Ah Jing does and he is definitely not the kind of person Ah Jing had portrayed him to be.” Fan Jin was already feeling very confused and he was quietly blaming within his heart that Ah Jing was making things more complicated now. Fan Jin was just contemplating how he was going to convince Fan Qi to allow Jun Xie to take over Fan Zhuo treatment when he had stumbled upon this scene of Ah Jing defaming Jun Xie viciously.

If it was not for Ah Jing’s unwavering loyalty to Fan Zhuo all this years, Fan Jin would have just followed his rage and struck the stubborn fool dead at that moment and rid himself of that persistent hindrance.

“Elder Young Master! Do not be bewitched by that Jun Xie! Don’t you know what kind of rumours are being spread in the academy about you because of Jun Xie? Jun Xie has never had any relations with both our Young Masters before and it was due to the Elder Young Master’s kindness that the Elder Young Master agreed to mentor Jun Xie. But Jun Xie had instead implicated our Elder Young Master and damaged his outstanding reputation. If he was really such a great person, he would not have dragged his feet and avoided showing up at the Beast Spirit faculty. Jun Xie had shamelessly stayed put at the Young Master’s place although he must know by doing that he will put the Elder Young Master’s reputation in question. Jun Xie is plainly taking advantage of our two Young Masters’ kindness!” Ah Jing exhorted, intending to wake Fan Jin to face the truth.

If it had only affected Fan Jin, he might still be able to disregard it. But when Jun Xie’s claws were stretching over Fan Zhuo, Ah Jing could not hold himself back any longer.

“That is pure slander! Little Xie will never become the kind of person you are talking about! What was he supposed to do at the

Beast Spirit faculty? To allow himself to be picked on by all those other disciples! ?” Fan Jin was staring at Ah Jing in wide eyed fury.

Ah Jing cowered. But when he remembered that Jun Xie was still staying at the bamboo grove, he dragged the courage from within himself.

“Why would the others pick on him? It was because he committed many despicable deeds! If he had felt any remorse, he should have stepped forward to apologise. But he had hid under Elder Young Master’s wing and not mentioned a word of the wrongs he had committed. That’s how scheming he is!”

Ah Jing was simply driving Fan Jin mad. Fan Jin had always thought that Ah Jing was not very bright but had no other negative traits. But now, he had just discovered one more undesirable trait of Ah Jing. Ah Jing heard only what he wanted to hear and believe, and it was really stretching his patience very thin.

“He is scheming? If he is really as scheming as you say, why did he save Little Zhuo’s life! ?” Fan Jin was already shouting.

Chapter 434: “A Stubborn Fool (2)”

“That was not due to her ability! Young Master’s illness had relapsed like this before and there was one time that the Young Master recovered without any treatment at all! It must have been the same this time and Jun Xie had just coincidentally been there as well! How old is Jun Xie? How can he possibly know how to cure the Young Master! ? The Young Master’s recovery could not possibly have anything to do with him and he had shamelessly claimed all the credit for himself! Jun Xie is truly incorrigible!” Ah Jing screamed in response.

A loud slap suddenly sounded in the office!

Unable to hold back his rage, Fan Jin had whipped out his hand and slapped Ah Jing across his face. Ah Jing’s cheek immediately swelled and he held his burning cheek in his hand, his eyes wide with shock as they stared at the fuming Fan Jin.

Fan Qi, who had been silent all this while sighed and said to Ah Jing in a soft voice: “Ah Jing, why don’t you leave first. I’ll speak to Fan Jin.”

Ah Jing was still holding his stinging cheek and he bit his lip as he withdrew himself from the room.

Fan Jin watched Ah Jing leave and he slammed the door shut after. He turned on his feet and sat down in a chair in a huff.

“You know very well what Ah Jing is like, why would you take him so seriously?” Fan Qi looked at his fuming son and shook his head helplessly.

Fan Jin was still frustrated as he replied: “I had not thought it was that bad, but this time, he has really gone overboard. I am very sure of Jun Xie’s character. That boy does not speak much, but he has never consciously provoked anyone. Little Zhuo’s relapse this time was all due to Jun Xie’s timely treatment that his condition

stabilised or I really dare not imagine what would have happened to Little Zhuo now. Ah Jing heard all the gossip and rumours in the academy and he believed them so easily and arbitrarily decided Jun Xie to be a scheming person. He is so hopelessly naive.”

“I don’t think you came all the way here to see me just for this.” Fan Qi said suddenly to Fan Jin, with a sparkle in his eyes.

Fan Jin sat up straight and cleared his throat with a light cough.

“I came to see you about Little Zhuo.”

“How is Little Zhuo now?” Fan Qi heard that Fan Zhuo had had a relapse and he had been worried. But Fan Jin’s appearance in the office had made him feel a little relieved.

If Fan Jin would leave his brother’s side, Fan Zhuo’s condition must have stabilised.

“He is sound asleep. It’s all thanks to Little Xie. I had not thought that at such a young age, he would possess such excellent skills in medicine.....” When the topic on Jun Xie’s medical skills came up, Fan Jin’s face lit up brightly and he excitedly related in detail how Jun Xie’s amazing skills had saved his little brother to Fan Qi.

Fan Qi was at first seated calm and collected in his chair, but as Fan Jin’s detailed description continued, Fan Qi’s eyes grew wide, his face filled with amazement.

“Is everything you are telling me really true?” Fan Qi asked in shock after he heard Fan Jin’s words.

He knew Fan Jin’s personality very well. Although the two brothers were not related by blood, they had however grown up together and were very close. Fan Jin had always been very protective of his weak and sickly brother and if anyone were to want to harm Fan Zhuo, Fan Jin would be the first one to stand up to defend his brother.

Hence, Fan Qi strongly believed that everything that Fan Jin was telling him today, was absolutely true.

“It’s true, Father. I came here today to ask for your permission to allow Jun Xie to take over Little Zhuo’s treatment.” Fan Jin said suddenly.

“That.....” Fan Qi was however hesitant. No matter how much he trusted his eldest son, the fact remained that Jun Xie was still only a fourteen year old. No matter what remarkable abilities Jun Xie possessed, he was still a very young child, how could he possibly be able to treat Fan Zhuo’s illness?

“Father, we have no other choice left. The Qing Yun Clan is no longer around and all the other doctors and physicians had been helpless. Rather than waiting indefinitely like this, why don’t we take gamble?” Fan Jin said determinedly. “If it is because of all the rumours and gossips going around in the academy that is making you doubt Jun Xie, I, as your own son, am willing to personally vouch for him. There is absolutely nothing wrong with Jun Xie’s character.”

Chapter 435: “A Stubborn Fool (3)”

Fan Qi shook his head and said: “That is the person Gu Li Sheng personally picked, I will naturally trust him.”

Fan Jin was completely shocked.

“Father! You know! ?”

Fan Qi looked at his own son in the eyes and said: “I might be old, but I am not foolish. Do you think without my consent, Gu Li Sheng would be able to put up his “sleight of hand” performance within the Zephyr Academy? I do not only know that Jun Xie is the real disciple that Gu Li Sheng picked, I am also aware of groundless but malicious rumours sweeping across the whole campus. You might want to know, that the jade emblem of the Beast Spirit faculty in Jun Xie’s hands was issued by me personally.”

After Fan Jin heard his father’s words, he suddenly laughed.

“Since Father trusts Little Xie’s character, all these things would be easy to arrange! Uncle Gu really have very keen eyes, the Little Xie that he picked was actually able to exceed him in the Spirit Healing technique! That surely proves Little Xie cannot be measured against the same yardstick used for normal youths. Father, just let Jun Xie have a go at it!”

Under Fan Jin’s persistent and unwavering persuasion, Fan Qi finally agreed to allow Jun Xie to temporarily care for Fan Zhuo’s condition. But if any situation beyond Jun Xie’s capabilities were to arise, he must at the first instance inform Fan Jin and Fan Qi, and was not to hide anything about Fan Zhuo’s condition from him.

Having gotten the answer he wanted, Fan Jin was all smiles when he walked out of the Headmaster’s office.

And hidden in a place near the office, Ah Jing was still holding his bruised cheek, thinking he had been unfairly victimised as he

watched the departing figure of Fan Jin.

He saw Fan Jin's happy expression and Ah Jing's heart sank. Judging from that reaction, he feared the Headmaster must have believed the Elder Young Master, and that must mean that Jun Xie would still be staying on in the bamboo grove in the days ahead.

When that thought came into his mind, Ah Jing was suddenly filled with dread.

If even the Headmaster believed Jun Xie's lies, who else would be able to save his Young Master! ?

"Ah Jing? What are you doing here?"

Suddenly, a voice tinged with query sounded from behind Ah Jing.

Ah Jing was startled and he hurriedly turned his head. Ah Jing saw an slightly elderly man who was about the same age as Fan Qi, looking at him with a kindly expression.

"Vice Headmaster!" Ah Jing realised who the man was and quickly bowed in greeting.

The Vice Headmaster waved his hand dismissively and his gaze caught sight of the red and swollen cheek on Ah Jing's face. He asked in slight surprise: "What happened?"

Ah Jing's eyes reddened and he looked into the gentle and benign face of Vice Head Ning.

Vice Head Ning's name was Ning Rui and he was the Vice Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy. He was also a fellow disciple of the Headmaster Fan Jin, having had the same Master. He was known to be a amicable and impartial man.

Ah Jing's thoughts were filled with concern for his Young Master's predicament and Ah Jing suddenly pleaded: "Vice Head Ning, will you save my Young Master! ?"

"Little Zhuo had a relapse?" Ning Rui's brow furrowed and he

asked with concern.

Ah Jing was blustering in tears and his nose was running as he related every detail of the events that had happened to Ning Rui. Ning Rui was the Vice Headmaster and Fan Qi trusted him a lot. Ah Jing was hoping that Ning Rui would be able to speak to Fan Qi and convince him to drive Jun Xie out of the bamboo grove.

After listening to Ah Jing, the look on Ning Rui's face was one of shock.

"Entrusting Little Zhuo into the care of a fourteen year old sounds like a rather careless thing to do." Ning Rui reasoned.

"Not just that, that Jun Xie's reputation in the academy cannot be any worse! How can they leave the Young Master in the hands of such a person! ? The Headmaster must have gotten muddled." Ah Jing sobbed.

Ning Rui comforted Ah Jing a little and promised to speak with the Headmaster about it, to see if Fan Qi would change his mind.

Having gotten Ning Rui's assurance, Ah Jing was relieved. He thanked Ning Rui profusely and finally left wiping his tears after Ning Rui coaxed him a little.

As he watched Ah Jing's disappearing back, the sympathy in Ning Rui's eyes suddenly disappeared, not leaving a single trace behind.

Chapter 436: “A Stubborn Fool (4)”

“Jun Xie?” Ning Rui tasted the words as they passed his lips. The name that Ah Jing had repeated countless times. His eyes narrowed and he turned around to say to the disciple behind him: “Bring Miss to my office.”

After relaying his order, Ning Rui proceeded to walk off, in a direction bringing him further away from the Headmaster’s office.

Ning Rui sat within his office, his gentle and kindly face was deep in thought. Moments later, a knocking broke the silence and Ning Rui looked up and said: “Come in.”

The door was pushed open and a young lady stepped in, gliding slowly into the room. She saw Ning Rui and lightly greeted: “Daddy wanted me to come over in such a hurry, I wonder what is it for?”

The young lady that just came in, moved as gracefully as a swan, and was just as beautiful as well. She was the one all the disciples in the academy deferentially addressed as Senior Ning, Ning Xin.

Ning Rui looked at his graceful and beautiful daughter with pride and raised his hand to beckon her to sit down before he said: “I saw Ah Jing today.”

“Ah Jing? The dumb kid serving Fan Zhuo where he is holed up in?” Ning Xin asked in reply.

Ning Rui nodded. “Yes, that kid is still as dense as ever and I was able to make him spill everything with just a few kindly words of concern. Fan Zhuo has had a guest in his little bamboo grove this past month, and Fan Jin was the one who brought the guest in.”

“Oh? Fan Zhuo was actually willing to stay with someone else? That’s rather strange.” Ning Xin said with an eyebrow raised.

“The one staying there is someone you know.”

“Who?”

“Jun Xie.”

Astonishment showed just a fleeting moment on Ning Xin’s face, and she recovered quickly.

“Fan Jin really brought that kid there? Why would he do that?” That was just a disciple discarded by the Spirit Healer faculty, why would Fan Jin put in so much effort?

Ning Rui continued: “You asked me to help you locate Jun Xie to use him against Fan Jin, and now you know where he is. But if he continues to stay with Fan Zhuo in the bamboo grove, you would not be able to touch him there.”

Ning Xin thought about it a moment. She did not care whether Jun Xie lived or died. She only wanted to make use of Jun Xie to suppress Fan Jin. Fan Jin was extremely popular and enjoyed a impeccable reputation in the Zephyr Academy, and would not be easily taken down. But this time, Fan Jin had placed a wrong bet and shielded Jun Xie who was constantly hounded by everyone for multiple wrongdoings. That had given Ning Xin the perfect opportunity to take Fan Jin down this time.

During this period, using Jun Xie’s infractions as an excuse, Ning Xin had made people spread unfavourable rumours about Fan Jin, and caused Fan Jin’s stellar reputation to take a big hit.

“There’s no rush. As long as I know where that kid is, your daughter will be able to force her to do what I want.” Ning Xin’s beautiful face was suddenly clouded by a trace of viciousness.

Ning Rui stared at Ning Xin and warned: “In terms of capabilities, Fan Jin is very much stronger than Fan Zhuo, and in the Zephyr Academy, Fan Jin’s reputation has always been one notch higher than yours.”

Ning Xin’s eyes narrowed. With her beautiful face and her guile, she had now become the Zephyr Academy’s most popular and most

respected Senior Ning. But no matter how hard she tried, she was unable to take over the position the disciples have in their hearts for Fan Jin.

Ning Rui went on: “Ah Jing told me that Fan Zhuo had a relapse and his illness seems to be getting worse. With the state Fan Zhuo’s body is in, he would not last the year. Without Fan Zhuo, Fan Qi will be without blood kin. Fan Jin is just an adopted child and his reputation has been greatly diminished. But all this is still not enough. Ning Xin, you have never disappointed me. I hope this time, you can come up with a plan good enough, to handle all the issues properly.”

Ning Xin nodded, in tacit understanding of what Ning Rui had clearly meant by “handle all the issues”.

Chapter 437: “A Stubborn Fool (5)”

The position of the Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy, had always been passed down from father to son.

The previous Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy was the Master of Fan Qi and Ning Rui. Their Master had no offsprings and he had handed down his position as Headmaster to his disciple, Fan Qi.

According to tradition, if Fan Zhuo remains alive, Fan Qi would be able to relinquish his Headmaster's position to Fan Zhuo. But if Fan Zhuo were to die, the fact remains that Fan Jin is only an adopted child. However, Fan Jin's exceedingly high popularity in the Zephyr Academy might just be able to push him up to legitimately succeed the position.

For Ning Rui to assume the position, he would have to get rid of the two sons of Fan Qi's before it would be possible.

Seeing through her father's intentions, Ning Xin was naturally happy to lend a hand to make it possible.

“In another two weeks, it would be the day we conduct the Spirit Hunt. At that time, all those seniors who are mentoring our new disciples will have to bring their new charges into the Battle Spirit Forest. Jun Xie is under Fan Jin's charge and they will have to go together. Fan Jin might be rather powerful, but if a dumb kid who knows nothing is following behind him with his every step, would he still be able to perform to his full potential?” Ning Xin laughed softly, hiding the laughter behind her hand.

Fan Jin had only himself to blame, to have stupidly chosen Jun Xie.

“That kid named Jun Xie, how much do you know about him? How are you so sure he would be a burden and not an asset to Fan Jin?” Ning Rui asked cautiously.

“That kid was sharing the same room with Yin Yan previously

but had moved out later. I've had him checked out. He possesses an orange spirit and a beast type ring spirit. His spiritual power might not be too shabby, but his ring spirit is however of a very low grade, an ordinary black cat. I would even say it's a useless ring spirit." Ning Xin replied, her voice laced with contempt. Attaining a orange spirit at fourteen was a great feat, but within the Zephyr Academy, there were a few sixteen or seventeen year old orange spirits as well, but the number was very small. However, the ring spirits those people possessed, were not what an ordinary black cat could match up to.

In a battle at this level, it was still largely dependant on their ring spirits.

"If that is really the case, it would be good for us. But Jun Xie is not like other disciples, he doesn't even go to the faculty. If you want to force him to go with Fan Jin to partake in the Spirit Hunt, it might not be that easy to convince him. But I have an idea that might just work." Ning Rui said.

"I would implore my Daddy to teach me a thing or two."

"That Jun Xie might be staying in the bamboo grove, but he is on bad terms with Ah Jing. Ah Jing is easily swayed and he has his reservations about Jun Xie after hearing all the gossip and rumours all over the academy. Ah Jing is currently looking to drive Jun Xie out of the bamboo grove and if you are to tell him that you can help him attain his wish, it might make your mission easier." Ning Rui said with a smile.

Ning Xin's eyes sparkled. The little bamboo grove had been assigned by Fan Qi to be Fan Zhuo's private dwelling to allow him a place for recuperation. Anyone besides people from the Fan family were not allowed to intrude without permission. If she could enlist Ah Jing's help in this, it would make things very easy for her.

"I will immediately get Yin Yan to get closer to Ah Jing." Ning

Xin already had an idea in her head. She had always pulled the strings from behind and had Yin Yan do all the work. She had thought that if by any chance, any of her schemes blew its cover someday, she would be able to flatly deny it all.

“Yin Yan seems very useful to you and listens to you a lot. It was fortunate that I did everything I could to have Fan Jin diverted away at that time.” Ning Rui’s face was smug as he recalled the incident.

With Fan Jin’s personality, he would not reject a new disciple for no rhyme or reason. And Ning Rui had hatched a scheme and arranged everything, hidden in the background. He knew that Gu Li Sheng would secretly observe the new disciples right after they were admitted. On that first night in the Zephyr Academy for the new disciples, Ning Rui had noticed Gu Li Sheng nod slightly when he was observing Yin Yan and Ning Rui knew that to be a sign that Gu Li Sheng intended to recruit Yin Yan into the Spirit Healer faculty. He had taken specific measures to have Fan Jin reject him and leave, and made Yin Yan bore hatred for Fan Jin. Yin Yan had instead become completely loyal to Ning Xin, who had selflessly saved Yin Yan from his “humiliation and embarrassment.”

Chapter 438: “A Stubborn Fool (6)”

When Fan Jin got back to the bamboo grove, Fan Zhuo was still sound asleep. He sat down for a long while outside the hut in the yard until Jun Xie came out from his room. He hurried over to catch up with Jun Xie and told him that Fan Qi had agreed to allow him to treat Fan Zhuo condition.

Those same words, were coincidentally overheard by Ah Jing who was just returning from the academy as well. At that moment, Ah Jing suddenly fell into dejection.

Having officially taken over Fan Zhuo’s treatment, Jun Wu Xie no longer kept mum on Fan Zhuo’s daily welfare. The first thing she changed was Fan Zhuo’s daily meals. She changed the meals from normal food to medicinal cuisine. Then, she went to Fan Zhuo’s room, and in one big sweep, she gathered up all the medicines and elixirs in there and threw them all out.

Her outrageously bold actions drove a twitch into the corner of Fan Jin’s eye and he secretly retrieved all the thrown all medicines and elixirs, which by the way, were all rare and incredibly expensive, in preparation for any unexpected situations.

Fan Zhuo’s body was not able to withstand any traumatic stimulations, in both the method of treatment employed for his illness, and the tonics given to fortify his body. Moreover, in the severely weakened state his body was in at that moment, any tonic in his body might adversely become a burden on Fan Zhuo.

One other thing bothered Jun Wu Xie about Fan Zhuo’s condition, and that was the circumstances surrounding Fan Zhuo’s relapse this time round.

Based on past experience, she felt that it was not simply just a relapse this time. From what she had observed on the condition of Fan Zhuo’s body and the kind of nursing he had received previously, which would not cure him, but she was nevertheless

certain that it was enough to allow Fan Zhuo to maintain the condition of his health without any surprises for a long period. But Fan Zhuo's sudden and violent relapse made her feel there was more to it than meets the eye.

Jun Wu Xie had checked Fan Zhuo's daily menu and went through the medicines, elixirs, and tonics that Fan Zhuo consumed on a daily basis, but had not found anything that would pose to be a problem.

To gain a deeper insight, Jun Wu Xie summoned Ah Jing. Fan Jin followed closely behind, and warned Ah Jing with his eyes glaring, to cooperate.

Ah Jing had no choice but to relate in detail what Fan Zhuo had eaten and consumed recently and even brought Jun Wu Xie and Fan Jin to the kitchen to check on the food stored there. What Fan Zhuo had been served the past two days were no different from normal.

Jun Wu Xie asked how often did Fan Zhuo suffer from his relapses and the answers told her nothing out of the ordinary.

There wasn't a pattern to Fan Zhuo's relapses. Sometimes it happened once a month, sometimes it happened once a week, there was no sequence to it.

Seeing all the leads were all about broken, Jun Wu Xie did not inquire further, and started to prepare things she needed to nurse Fan Zhuo back to health.

Specifically targeting Fan Zhuo's condition, Jun Wu Xie intended to use a two pronged approach. Medicinal cuisine would be used to nurse his body from internally, and externally, medicinal baths would be used to boost the effects coupled with daily acupuncture on Fan Zhuo.

Fan Zhuo was initially rather puzzled by Fan Jin's arrangements and was finding it a little to come to terms with having Jun Xie

treat his illness. But after hearing Fan Jin's explanation, Fan Zhuo understood Fan Jin's rationale, turned to thank Jun Xie for saving him, and was extremely receptive of the arrangements Jun Xie had planned for him.

Time flew and five days passed quickly. These five days to Fan Zhuo, had him feeling it was the most comfortable time he had spent in a long time. The usual pain felt in his body had gradually disappeared and some colour had returned to his face. His complexion might not be as pink as a normal youth, but Fan Zhuo looked more energized than before.

Ah Jing would frequently urge Fan Zhuo to beware of this and that time and time again, but Fan Zhuo ignored Ah Jing's urgings completely.

When he saw that Fan Zhuo and Jun Xie were getting closer and closer by the day, Ah Jing's fists suddenly clenched tightly, as he sent out his ring spirit, carrying a little note with it.

In the other end of the academy, Yin Yan was standing by the window in his room within the dormitory, reading a little note he had just received. The corners of his mouth curled up into a chilling smile and he took quick steps as he walked out of the dormitory building. He secretly gathered several disciples of the Zephyr Academy together in a dark corner, and whispered schemingly to all of them.

A storm was brewing in the Zephyr Academy and the peaceful and tranquil little bamboo grove, was about to lose its peace and quiet.

Chapter 439: “A Delicious Killer (1)”

That afternoon, Fan Jin came to the bamboo grove for his usual exploitation of his brother. When he saw his brother's rosier cheeks, he felt both relieved and glad at the same time.

Fan Zhuo's meals had been completely switched to medicinal cuisine and though it was not as tasty as the usual cuisine Fan Qi had previously arranged, it was nevertheless different and a welcomed change.

Ah Jing's face was dark as he brought the dishes out to the table. Fan Zhuo picked up his chopsticks consciously and lowered his head to start eating the medicinal cuisine prepared for him, trying his hardest to shut out the incredibly alluring fragrance wafting past his nose from the lavish spread prepared for the other two.

His appetite had always been small and after having taken Jun Xie's medicinal cuisine for the past few days, the colour on his face had improved considerably and he felt more energetic. He was starting to feel that he had a lot more to look forward to in his days ahead and sacrificing a little on his lust for fine food was a compromise he would willingly accept.

Fan Jin on the other hand, was oblivious to it all and his chopsticks stirred up a small whirlwind on the table. Fortunately, Fan Zhuo was quicker this time and grabbed a small amount of food from all the various dishes and put them on a separate dish for Jun Xie. If not, with the slow pace that Jun Xie ate, he would be left with nothing with Fan Jin eating at the same table.

Besides Jun Wu Xie and the Fan brothers, there was another tiny figure at the table.

Ever since Fan Zhuo knew that Jun Xie's ring spirit was not afraid of him, he had often asked for the little black cat to eat at the same table with them.

Although ring spirits were not able to obtain any nourishment from mortal foods, ring spirits were however not adverse to tasting them.

The little black cat was exactly like that. Every time that Fan Zhuo arranged for delicacies to be prepared for it, the little black cat had never refused him, and ate the food without any fuss. While it nibbled at the food, its tail would often brush against Fan Zhuo's arm, bringing about a reddish tinge to show on Fan Zhuo's face.

Fan Jin was gobbling up the feast on the table quickly while Jun Wu Xie was taking her own sweet time to nibble and chew. After a few moments, Jun Wu Xie's chopsticks suddenly stilled.

"What is it?" Fan Jin asked of Jun Xie over his emptying bowl. Fan Jin could not help but ask when he saw that the dishes picked out for Jun Xie had not lessened by much and the bowl of rice was still almost full.

"Is the food not suited to your taste?" Fan Zhuo put down his own chopsticks and asked Jun Xie, concern written over his face.

Jun Wu Xie frowned and her lips were pressed together. She stared at the spread before her on the table and suddenly stood up to snatch the chopsticks from Fan Jin's hand and threw them upon the floor.

"Wh..... I am not finished....." Fan Jin stared, his eyes blinking in confusion at Jun Xie.

"Do not eat." Jun Wu Xie said suddenly.

Fan Jin was horrified, and his expression suddenly changed. He immediately pulled out a silver chopstick he carried around with him and tested all the dishes on the table with it. But he did not see any signs of the silver chopstick turning dark as he pulled it out from the various dishes before him.

"There's no poison." Fan Jin said.

“It’s not poison. It’s the tonic.” Jun Wu Xie’s eyes narrowed. The room was filled with the fragrance of food from the meal spread out on the table before them. But masked under the myriad smells present, Jun Wu Xie detected a very faint smell of herbs.

The smell was not distinct but Jun Wu Xie was certain that it was not poisonous, but it was some kind of tonic.

“Tonic?” Fan Jin was even more confused.

Jun Wu Xie lowered her head in thought as the question that had bugged her all this while suddenly had an answer.

“Fan Zhuo’s relapse was not a coincidence but was caused by someone’s hand.” Jun Wu Xie reaffirmed her suspicion all this while aloud.

“What! ?” Fan Jin stood up in anger, his face incredulous as he stared at Jun Xie. “Little Xie, are you saying..... someone had drugged these dishes?”

Jun Wu Xie nodded.

“In the beginning, when I had taken Fan Zhuo’s pulse, I had thought that something felt out of place. Based on the condition of Fan Zhuo’s bodily health at that time, his pulse shouldn’t have been that chaotic.”

Chapter 440: “A Delicious Killer (2)”

“What do you mean?” Fan Zhuo’s expression became serious as well.

“Your body is in a very weakened state. And it is due to the weakness that it cannot be subjected to any harsh stimulations or reactions. But that anomaly had however occurred repeatedly on your body. This could only mean that someone has gone through some undetected avenues to induce your illness to relapse.” Jun Wu Xie explained as she rubbed at her chin gently in thought. She finally understood why she had been unable to detect any trace of poison in Fan Zhuo’s body.

The culprit had never used poison right from the start, but had instead cleverly employed another method.

“Fan Zhuo has been sickly from young and all his internal organs are much weaker than normal people. In Fan Zhuo’s case, if you want to give him tonics to fortify and strengthen his body, you can only give him those with a mild effect. However, if Fan Zhuo is given anything harsh with a strong effect, his weakened body would be unable to bear up under the violent reaction induced and that will lead to a sudden relapse of his illness without requiring anyone who wished him harm to exert any other efforts.” Jun Wu Xie’s eyes grew colder, as she saw the craftiness of the culprit from the method they employed.

Any common poison, however careful it was used, would be easily detected, but using nourishing tonics in such a roundabout way, however, would be seen as nothing unusual.

Jun Wu Xie had initially thought that Fan Zhuo had been poisoned, but she had not seen any signs on Fan Zhuo that showed that he had been poisoned. It was until the last relapse that Fan Zhuo had suffered that made Jun Wu Xie sure that her suspicions had not been wrong.

To Fan Zhuo's current condition, a tonic was as good as poison to him.

"It's been added into these dishes here?" Fan Jin's was feeling his rage start to rise.

"Yes. But the culprit is extremely crafty. He did not add in any into the food we eat everyday, and only slips it in when he wants Fan Zhuo to suffer a relapse. By using a method like this, he was assured that it would be reliably delivered to Fan Zhuo, and he would not be easily found out. As the amount of tonics and elixirs that Fan Zhuo consumes daily is large, even if physicians were brought in to check, they would not suspect that Fan Zhuo's relapse had been brought about by a non poisonous tonic. The culprit need not employ the use of poison, but merely needs to use nourishing tonics against Fan Zhuo, and wait undetected for Fan Zhuo's body to expire on its own, under the torment brought about by his inability to withstand the induced nourishment."

The method employed was rather devious, and Jun Wu Xie's eyebrow was raised as she grew absorbed in her own thoughts.

If she had not paid close attention to the food and drinks that Fan Zhuo consumed daily, she might not have discovered it so soon.

Upon hearing Jun Xie's words, Fan Zhuo's face had paled considerably and Fan Jin's fists were tightly clenched in rage.

"Who is it! ? Who is so bent on sending Little Zhuo to his death! ?" Fan Jin shattered the table with a slap of his palm on the table with a loud crash, scattering the crockery all over the floor.

Fan Zhuo was already so defenceless and weak. Who could be so vicious as to want to push him over the cliff into the deep abyss!

Jun Wu Xie gave the brothers a sideways glance. "It is not too difficult to find out the identity of the culprit. We will only need to wait."

In that peaceful little bamboo grove, there had only been Fan

Zhuo and Ah Jing staying in there all this time. Even though Ah Jing had borne a grudge against Jun Wu Xie during the period she had been there, Jun Wu Xie did not think that Ah Jing would actually add anything into their food. All the raw ingredients, fruits and vegetables they ate were delivered to the bamboo grove by Fan Qi's disciple personally daily, and he was absolutely trustworthy. If the problem did not lie in the person receiving the goods, the only possibility left was that the problem laid in the food delivered here itself.

To uncover who was the culprit behind it, they could only wait in inaction for the culprit to deliver more clues right into their hands.

“Wait?” Fan Jin was a little puzzled.

Jun Wu Xie turned to Fan Zhuo and said: “You did not find anything odd with the dishes and you ate them as you did usually. And you will suffer a relapse today.”

Fan Zhuo was shocked, but he raised his head without hesitation and looked at Jun Xie to say: “I’ll do what you tell me to.”

“Little Xie, you want Little Zhuo to fake a relapse? But..... Little Zhuo doesn’t know how to.....” Fan Jin knew his little brother very well. Asking Fan Zhuo to put up a convincing act was just impossible for him.

Jun Wu Xie looked up at the brothers and said softly: “With me around, he doesn’t need to know how.”

Chapter 441: “A Delicious Killer (3)”

That afternoon, Fan Zhuo had another relapse. The ferocity of the relapse was so intense that Ah Jing fell to the ground in shock. Just as Ah Jing was about to run out in search of a physician to save Fan Zhuo, he suddenly recovered miraculously. He comforted Ah Jing a little and the matter ended there.

The next day, after the person delivered the daily food ingredients to the kitchen, Jun Wu Xie asked Fan Jin to retrieve a few samples from among the delivery. She checked them thoroughly but did not find anything suspicious.

“The culprit is being very careful. The food that we eat everyday has not been drugged.” Jun Wu Xie looked at the radish in her hand and tossed it to Fan Jin.

Fan Jin caught it and turned it over and over, inspecting the radish closely before he took a big bite out of it, crunching it in his mouth.

“It seems that the culprit wants Little Zhuo to suffer from a relapse only occasionally, and let the continuous and prolonged turmoil take its toll and eat at Little Zhuo’s lifeforce till it depletes completely on its own. It’s all part of his vicious plan.” Fan Jin narrowed his eyes as he stared at the radish, picturing it as the culprit, and took a enormous bite out of it.

“We can only wait for the culprit to strike again.” Fan Zhuo sighed, resigned.

As the three of them chatted, shouts were heard from outside in the little bamboo grove.

“Jun Xie! You despicable cad! After committing such shameless atrocities, you decided to hide here! ? Just get out of the Zephyr Academy now!”

“Jun Xie! Not even Fan Jin and Fan Zhuo can shield you. Do not

think for moment that everything will just blow over! All your unscrupulous and shameless deeds have been made known and everyone in the academy knows of it!”

The incessant shouts and curses caused the faces of both the Fan brothers to darken immediately.

The three people in the room walked out.

As they came out into the little yard within the bamboo grove, they saw several Zephyr Academy disciples still shouting, standing in the yard.

Fan Zhuo stared in anger at the young intruders within his yard.

The bamboo grove was a space specially segregated by Fan Qi for Fan Zhuo’s recuperation and the place was off limits to everyone. Even the teachers were not allowed access and needless to say, the place was strictly prohibited from any of the academy’s disciples. Strangely, these disciples had suddenly appeared and started shouting and cursing at Jun Xie right here within the bamboo grove!

The main doors into the yard were standing wide open and it seemed these disciples had found their way in uninhibited.

“Ah Jing!” Fan Jin assessed the situation and knew how this had come about.

If someone had not opened the door from the inside, these troublemakers would not have been able to come in here!

Ah Jing came running out from the kitchen and his clean face was tinged with panic.

“Why are all these people in here! ? Have you forgotten the Headmaster’s strict orders! ?” Fan Jin stared at Ah Jing in fury. Ah Jing had not been too difficult recently. Besides the fact that his face was perpetually unhappy, he had not done anything else against Fan Zhuo’s wishes. But today’s incident was just too much!

Ah Jing's expression was one of shock as his eyes looked at the disciples within the yard and looked at the wide open doors, before he said: "Elder Young Master, you have misunderstood. I was just sweeping the pebbled path outside when I suddenly remembered that I had left something over the fire in the kitchen. I hurried back into the kitchen and forgot to shut the doors. I do not know how these people got in here."

After saying that, Ah Jing walked towards those disciples and chased them out. Those disciples were still shouting their curses as they were being ushered out, pointedly shouting out the various vicious deeds of Jun Xie.

Jun Wu Xie watched without expression at the farce before her, and she did not miss the guilt in Ah Jing's eyes when he was explaining himself to Fan Jin.

It seemed that this person really hated her.

"Jun Xie, if you really think you are innocent, then you wouldn't be hiding yourself here like this! Be a man and get out of here!" As they were being pushed out, those disciples still did not give up and continued to shout.

Fan Jin's face turned incredibly dark at that moment.

Chapter 442: “It’s Time (1)”

It was thought the staying within the bamboo grove would give them the peace that was desired. They had never thought the other disciples would be so bold to breach the boundaries to disrupt the tranquility.

Fan Zhuo stared with disapproval at Ah Jing, knowing very well what he had done.

“Ah Jing, if anything like this happens one more time, you can go back to the academy.” Fan Zhuo said with a sigh. Ah Jing had been around so long that Ah Jing had been thought to have as good as grown up together with him. Ah Jing had put Fan Zhuo’s interest before his own from young and though he was fiercely loyal, he had not been entirely bright. The fact was that Jun Xie had treated Fan Zhuo for quite a while and his condition had shown considerable visible progress. But even that had still not deterred Ah Jing from believing in the rumours in the academy, and Fan Zhuo had no choice but to issue an ultimatum.

Ah Jing stood blankly in the yard as he saw the cold stare that Fan Zhuo was giving him. Ah Jing felt as if he had been struck by lightning and he clenched his fists tightly, before he turned his stare towards Jun Xie.

Jun Wu Xie glanced at Ah Jing and pulled off a leaf from the bamboo and put it before her eyes before she turned to walk away without a word.

The Fan brothers followed Jun Xie into the hut and Fan Zhuo observed Jun Xie carefully. However, he did not notice anything different from usual and there was no anger.

“Little Xie, what did your action mean earlier?” Fan Zhuo noticed Jun Xie’s earlier action when he had put a leaf before his eyes and that had made Fan Zhuo curious.

** “Can’t see the forest for the trees.” Jun Wu Xie poured herself some tea and sat down to sip at it slowly.

The Fan brothers exchanged a glance and they understood immediately.

Jun Xie must have known of Ah Jing’s enmity towards him right from the beginning and in today’s incident, Jun Xie must have thought exactly as they had. Jun Xie had not said a word but had only thrown a hint as a reply to Ah Jing’s actions today.

“Cough, you shouldn’t take today’s incident to heart. I assure you that things like this will never happen again.” Fan Jin cleared his throat self consciously as he said those words. If it had been anyone else, he would have given that person a thrashing. But Ah Jing had been unwavering in his loyalty to Fan Zhuo for many years and his fists were a little hesitant to land heavily upon Ah Jing.

Jun Wu Xie gave Fan Jin a glance but remained silent.

Guarantee that such things would never happen again?

Jun Wu Xie’s mouth curled up at the corners, but there was absolutely no warmth in that.

As expected, two days later, the same farce played out once again within the bamboo grove. It was another group of disciples this time but the script had been almost the same.

Ah Jing did not even bother to appear this time and allowed the shouting and admonishments to continue unhindered.

Fan Jin was not around this time around and only Fan Zhuo and Jun Wu Xie were there. Faced with those shouting disciples, Fan Zhuo was just about to go out and drive them away when Jun Wu Xie stopped him.

“Leave them be.” Jun Wu Xie was perfectly calm within the room.

“You’re not angry?” Fan Zhuo stared at Jun Xie’s expressionless face and he totally admired Jun Xie for his impossible composure.

“I’m listening.” Jun Wu Xie replied.

“Listening to what?”

“To hear what the one behind all this is up to.” Jun Wu Xie was looking at the tea within her cup and her eyes were fixated on a pale green tea leaf floating in the middle upon the tea’s surface. Jun Wu Xie pushed her little finger onto the floating tea leaf lightly and the tea’s surface broke as it rippled towards the sides of the cup.

Fan Zhuo did not answer, not understanding what Jun Xie had meant.

“The day of the Spirit Hunt is coming up fast.” Jun Wu Xie looked up, as she looked out the window, staring at the lush green grove of bamboos.

“That’s right.” Fan Zhuo could not fathom what Jun Xie was thinking.

“It’s time.” Jun Wu Xie turned her gaze back into the room. Things have come to a point. She had completed redesigning the Spirit Healing technique. And the time is ripe.

“Little Xie?” Fan Zhuo’s eyes had remained on Jun Xie all this while. He suddenly felt a change come over Jun Xie and he seemed to be different from his usual self. That impenetrable calm had gradually faded from his eyes and was replaced by a terrifying chill.

** Translator’s note: Chinese idiom was used here, read as “yī yè zhàng mù” and 一葉障目 in Chinese characters.

Literal translation says “eyes obscured by a single leaf”, meaning when a person cannot see the wider picture and sees only what is foremost before their eyes. Hence I inserted “Can’t see the forest for the trees” in translation.

Chapter 443: “It’s Time (2)”

Jun Wu Xie stood up and proceeded to step out of the room. Fan Zhuo hurried to get up and followed after Jun Xie.

In the yard, the disciples who were shouting endlessly were further encouraged when they saw Jun Xie come out, and their curses and taunts grew in intensity.

“Go back to your doghouses and let the pack know that I will turn up on the day of the Spirit Hunt. Since you dogs want me to go so badly, I shall grant your wishes. Just don’t regret it later.” Jun Wu Xie said as she gave the disciples a chilling gaze. The frosty voice penetrated like a cold blade, piercing through the ruckus the disciples were making.

The disciples were shocked and suddenly terrified by Jun Wu Xie’s words and they were just about to step up to rebut when they were met with the frosty eyes of Jun Wu Xie’s. They saw the frigid chill in those eyes and the razor sharp gaze. The chill penetrated their hearts and the disciples all cringed involuntarily, feeling all their courage seep into the ground. One of them barely managed a soft almost inaudible mumble in his attempt to say something and they all ran away with their tails between their legs.

After those troublemakers had left, Fan Zhuo asked immediately: “Little Xie, you are intending to go for the Spirit Hunt? What did your words earlier mean?”

The Spirit Hunt, was a grand event the Zephyr Academy organized every half yearly. On the day of the Spirit Hunt, all of the Zephyr Academy’s disciples would assemble and be sent to the Battle Spirits Forest to hunt the Spirit Beasts. Hunting Spirit Beasts will gain you spirit stones and train the disciples in their actual combat experience. But the Battle Spirits Forest extended across vast expanses and even when the thousands of disciples entered the forest all at once, they would be just like a grain of

sand in the sea. All kinds of Spirit Beasts, from low to high grades, reside within the forest and if one was not careful, and they angered a ferocious Spirit Beast, they could easily become food for the Spirit Beast. In all the previous Spirit Hunt meets, there were always disciples who lost their lives to the Battle Spirits Forest.

Besides the disciples in the main division of the Zephyr Academy, even the branch division disciples were included in the Spirit Hunt. And the highest losses in the previous meets, had always come from the branch division.

On the day of the Spirit Hunt, those seniors who were mentoring the new disciples, were required to lead their wards throughout the whole event and this was one of the main reason why so many seniors dreaded to mentor the freshmen.

The Battle Spirits Forest was filled with danger and one could not be sure if they would get through it safely themselves and being dragged down by a weak and inexperienced freshman wasn't an entirely attractive proposition.

Jun Xie might have attained an orange spirit, but his ring spirit was.....

Fan Zhuo could not help himself but turned his gaze solemnly onto the little black cat on Jun Xie's shoulders.

Little black was really cute, but when it came to battle.....

"I've stayed here rather long, it is time I go back to the academy." Jun Wu Xie said with her eyes narrowed. So many people "yearned" for her to return, and she thought she should grant them their wish.

Fan Zhuo's face was one of panic and he hurriedly said: "Little Xie, you do not have to care about what all the others say. My brother and I know for sure you are not the kind of person they say you are. You do not have to change a single thing about yourself and you can just stay here as long as you want. Having you here

has been really nice and you saved my life, making you my saviour. I know all this is the doing of Ah Jing and I will make him go back to the academy tomorrow. You..... don't go." Fan Zhuo's tone was almost pleading and his pale face was looking more tired than usual due to the anxiety.

However, Jun Wu Xie shook her head.

"My return, is not due to anyone's influence, and just my decision alone."

Ah Jing was at best only a pawn. Jun Wu Xie could not be bothered to retaliate against a mindless idiot. She had heard every word those disciples who had come to the bamboo grove shouting and cursing in the past two days. Every of those curses and scoldings had all been taunting her to get out of the bamboo grove.

And if she were to return to the academy at this time, she would have to partake in the Spirit Hunt.

Was that not what those people were after?

But.....

With her return, those people had better not regret it. Even if they do.....

It's too late!

Chapter 444: “It’s Time (3)”

Jun Xie was determined to partake in the Spirit Hunt and Fan Zhuo was unable to convince him otherwise even when he dragged Fan Jin together with him to persuade Jun Xie.

Fortunately, Fan Jin will be with Jun Xie during the Spirit Hunt and Fan Zhuo had complete confidence in his brother’s skills and that set his mind at ease a little.

Ah Jing was driven out from the bamboo grove that very night by Fan Zhuo. Ah Jing sobbed and wailed noisily and incessantly, which made Fan Jin so frustrated that he knocked Ah Jing out with a single strike and threw him into the Headmaster’s study, dumping the problem into Fan Qi’s lap.

The day of the Spirit Hunt was closing in fast and the hunt would go on for seven days. Jun Wu Xie prepared all the things that Fan Zhuo would need for his recuperation and during the time she would be away, she would leave the little black cat behind in the bamboo grove.

When the Fan brothers heard that, they immediately refused.

From what they could see, Little Black was Jun Xie’s Ring Spirit and although the little cat might be of a low grade, it would nevertheless still be a form of protection for the small sized Jun Xie.

Jun Wu Xie had intended to leave the little black cat behind to identify the culprit behind Fan Zhuo’s drugging. However, with herself away from the bamboo grove, Fan Zhuo would not be able put on a convincing act of a relapse anyway, Jun Wu Xie finally gave up on the idea.

A few days before the day of the Spirit Hunt, Jun Wu Xie shut herself in completely. The Snow Lotus’ recovery was coming along rather nicely, and she needed the last few days to intensify the

Snow Lotus' healing before it could revert back to his former glory.

The improved Spirit Healing technique nourished the Snow Lotus' spirit a little by little gradually till it finally regained its exquisite and elegant form.

"What is the actual purpose of taking part in the Spirit Hunt?" The little black cat was lying on the table, brushing at the Snow Lotus' petals with its slowing swishing tail.

It did not believe for a moment that its mistress would succumb to the taunts of a few brats in the academy.

Jun Wu Xie's palm was covered over the top of the Snow Lotus and slivers of her spirit power were coming out from her palm and enveloping the pristine white lotus flower in its entirety.

"I've been mired in the orange level for a long time." Jun Wu Xie said softly.

The little black cat's eyes lit up.

"Haha! You've already selected your unlucky target?"

In order for Jun Wu Xie to achieve a breakthrough, she needed to devour the ring spirit of others. She had been stuck in the orange level for some time now but she had not found any suitable ring spirits. When Jun Wu Xie spoke those words, the little black cat understood immediately what its mistress was driving at.

"No." Jun Wu Xie replied.

The little black cat blinked in thought. Based on what it knew of its mistress, it guessed: "You are just waiting to see who would come up to you on their own, and ask to be devoured?"

Jun Wu Xie nodded slightly. "Someone wants me to take part in the Spirit Hunt, and that would naturally mean they have made plans for me there. No matter who it is, I should be grateful to them."

She would be grateful to anyone who would deliver a ring spirit

for her to achieve the breakthrough, and was extending her thanks in advance.

“Moreover, Hua Yao and the others will be taking part as well and it’s high time we meet up with them.” In the Cloudy Peaks the last time, the Two Headed Bone Snake and the Yin Yang Bear had sustained severe injuries and since Jun Wu Xie had learnt the Spirit Healing Technique, she had naturally thought of them.

“Would the little blooming idiot be fully recovered in the next few days?” The little black cat asked, staring the newly revived Snow Lotus.

“Yes.” Jun Wu Xie lowered her eyes, as they suddenly steeled in determination.

The time passed day by day and the day of the Spirit Hunt for the Zephyr Academy finally arrived once again.

Early that morning, everyone within the Zephyr Academy readied themselves for the trip as they made their way towards the Battle Spirits Forest, to undergo the trial that was conducted two times a year.

Over in the forest, some of them might start to become aware of the initial approach towards a breakthrough, while some others might suddenly lose their lives forever to the unknown Spirit Beasts that roam the forests.

Hundreds of horse carriages rumbled in an orderly convoy, rolling out through the gates of the Zephyr Academy.

Chapter 445: Spirit Hunt (1)

Ning Xin was in the same carriage as Yin Yan. The carriage wheels rolled on and Ning Xin stared at the scenery speeding past outside the window as she said: “Are you certain that Jun Xie is here?”

Yin Yan replied: “I’m sure. I had people watch Fan Jin closely. Although Jun Xie arrived a little later, he got on the last carriage with Fan Jin.”

“Oh?” Ning Xin turned, her beautiful features tinged with intrigue. “He really turned up. Seems like you did very well, having successfully incited him to come.”

Yin Yan smiled but did not reply, his heart raging in anger.

He did not forget the words those disciples had brought back and related to him from Jun Xie that day!

Jun Xie had called him a dog!

The fists hidden within his sleeves were tightly clenched and Yin Yan’s eyes flashed viciously.

[He’ll allow Jun Xie to be smug a few more days, and when they are in the Battle Spirits Forest, Jun Xie will find out that he will never walk out of that forest alive!]

“Although Jun Xie will be a hindrance, but Fan Jin’s skills are still not to be slighted. We should get some people to test them out a little.” Ning Xin warned. After a short pause, she continued: “That trash Li Zi Mu is here as well. He was rather proud of himself previously, let them take the first shot at them. He might be a piece of trash, but his ring spirit isn’t too shabby. A grade five ring spirit..... Sigh, it’s such a waste on useless trash like him.”

“Right! I will speak to him about it. Senior Ning had not seen him for quite a while now and the kid is feeling rather anxious.” Yin Yan gloated secretly but hid it well as he said those words. He had

not seen eye to eye with that idiotic piece of trash all this time and after having stayed in the Spirit Healer faculty for such so long, he was still unable to even grasp the basic fundamentals of Spirit Healing. He was just absolutely useless.

Useless trash like this had long been abandoned by Ning Xin.

Ning Xin laughed coldly and said: “Useless and dumb as he is, and he wants me to see him?”

“Do not forget, along the way in our journey towards the Battle Spirits Forest, ask them not to forget to take care of Jun Xie. It will be even better if they could force Fan Jin to step forward to defend him and have Fan Jin’s reputation fall even further.” Ning Xin ordered maliciously.

“Yes, Senior Ning!”

.....

The Zephyr Academy’s convoy had travelled throughout the day and finally stopped as dusk approached. They had come halfway on their journey to the Battle Spirits Forest and it was expected that they would need another day at least before they would reach their destination.

All the disciples came out of their carriages. Having been jolted around within the carriages for the whole day, all of them were feeling sore and were aching all over.

The bonfire had been lit and the tired disciples sat around it, holding a hot meal in their hands and sipped at hot drinks, in small groups of three and five.

After the last horse carriage pulled to a stop, two figures stepped out of the carriage and the other disciples nearby looked up at them, and all the gazes were trained onto the smaller figure between them.

“Ptui! How can such a person still ashamedly remain in the Zephyr Academy? I had not seen him for a long time and thought

that he had left for good!” One of the disciples cursed in a loud whisper.

“What is he doing here? Doesn’t he know the Spirit Hunt is filled with dangers?”

“Danger? You should be telling that to others! Not that guy, didn’t you see who was with him? That was Fan Jin! Ranked fourth in the last Spirit Battle Tournament! Leading that useless little guy around within the Battle Spirits Forest for a few days would be child’s play to him. Moreover, when you kill the Spirit Beasts, they drop spirit stones. With Fan Jin leading the charge at the front, that little one will just need to stay back and pick those stones up without moving a finger, why would he not come?”

“What does Senior Fan see in that puny kid anyway, the kid is obviously so shameless but Senior Fan is still so protective of him.”

Chapter 446: “Spirit Hunt (2)”

“Who knows?” The youths were seen to be saying it in contempt, but deep in their hearts, many of them were actually envious and jealous of Jun Xie, to have the highly admired Fan Jin hovering around him so protectively.

When they got off the carriage, all the stares from the other disciples were directed at them from many different directions, and not a single one among them was friendly. Jun Wu Xie was unperturbed and followed Fan Jin to sit down beside a fire.

Several disciples were seated by the fire and when they saw Jun Xie, they pursed up their mouths, their faces showing obvious disdain.

Fan Jin suppressed the anger rising up within his chest, or he would have given those disciples a good thrashing.

“It’s been a long day, eat something.” Fan Jin handed a packet of dried preserved meat to Jun Wu Xie and Jun Wu Xie bit at it silently as endless mutterings and insults reached her ears. “Meow~”

[These people are really being obnoxious!"]

Jun Wu Xie did not say a word but continued to finish up the food and had a short drink before standing up and returning to the carriage to rest.

When they saw that Jun Wu Xie had left, those jealous and angry voices grew louder.

Fan Jin’s face was turning dangerously dark. The vicious curses and malicious insinuations were even too much for him to hear as a bystander and he did not know how Jun Xie could be so unaffected. Fan Jin did not want to stay around longer than needed and ate quickly before he returned to the carriage as well.

He had wanted to comfort Jun Xie a little but he came back to

find Jun Xie fast asleep leaning against the carriage wall. Fan Jin sighed softly and took out his coat to cover Jun Xie's tiny frame. Fan Jin sat directly across Jun Xie and held his head in his hand as he looked at the tiny figure sleeping before him.

To be frank, Jun Xie's features were not thought to be outstanding, but without knowing why, Fan Jin was beginning to find that face more and more attractive. That high nose, those red lips, and the long curly lashes on those closed eyes.

As he stared longer at that face, Fan Jin found that the air in the carriage was getting hot and stifling. He gulped down some water and got out of the carriage, to let the chill night air cool down his heated body.

The little black cat was lying beside Jun Wu Xie and it opened its eyes a slit to peek at the flustered Fan Jin who had just hurried out of the carriage.

If that insanely overpowered demon were to know that someone here had developed some other intentions towards its mistress, wouldn't he make mincemeat out of Fan Jin?

After resting for a night, the Zephyr Academy's convoy continued on their journey. After two whole days of seemingly endless trundling and rattling, they finally arrived at the edge of the Battle Spirits Forest at midnight on the second day.

The vast expanses of the Battle Spirits Forest stretched endlessly, farther than the eye could see, and the forest bordered several different countries. The lure of the Spirit Beasts here attracted the eye of many and many people from different powers came here to hunt them, to gain more spirit stones.

High quality spirit stones were able to increase the powers of ring spirits and were in high demand. While ordinary Spirit Beasts only yielded tiny grains of spirit stones when they are killed and were too tiny to be set onto their rings linked to their ring spirits, people sought to hunt the higher grade Spirit Beasts to gain spirit stones

that they could set in their rings.

Although it was midnight, the outskirts of the Battle Spirits Forest were lit almost bright as day.

Big and small tents were erected all around the outskirts of the forest and many groups of hunters from many different powers were readying themselves for the hunt early the next morning within the Battle Spirits Forest.

When the Zephyr Academy's convoy arrived at the edges of the Battle Spirits Forest, they inadvertently attracted the attention of the groups of hunters. The silvery white banners flying over the carriages were known to every single one of those hunters. The Zephyr Academy, one of the top three academies, well known to be a place that produced elite fighters and they had what everyone paid the most attention to, the Zephyr Academy's one and only Spirit Healer faculty!

All the different factions among the hunters were also eyeing for a chance to win over the hearts of any disciple from the Spirit Healer faculty!

Chapter 447: “Spirit Hunt (3)”

It was late into the night, and the Zephyr Academy disciples were all exhausted. All of them remained within their carriages and nibbled some food before sleep claimed their tired bodies.

Dawn broke the next morning and as the sun peeked over the horizon, the well rested disciples jumped out of their carriages. The seniors were feeling wary as they stared towards the place that had haunted their dreams on many nights and were looking slightly worried. The new disciples were their direct opposites as many were feeling excited and were exuberant with anticipation. Though some of them were quietly worried, they were nevertheless rather relieved that they would be accompanied by their mentors.

The teachers leading the expedition then gathered the new disciples and explained their mission here at the Battle Spirits Forest.

The whole Spirit Hunt would run for a period of seven days and the Zephyr Academy disciples were to only move about within a marked out area in the South Eastern corner of the Battle Spirits Forest where they would be provided with a detailed map. They did not expect the disciples to meet up with any major problems and the Spirit Beasts did not belong to the higher grades in the allocated area of movement and it would be relatively safe for them.

The teachers did not forget to remind the new disciples in a grave tone, to not stray into unmarked territories as they might run into many high grade Spirit Beasts in those areas. The terrain might be treacherous and if they were not careful, they might easily lose their way within the forest filled with endless dangers.

All the disciples would be given two signal flares and if they were to come across any danger, were injured or ill, they could choose to

release the signals and the teachers just outside the forest would evacuate the affected disciple as soon as possible. But, if you pull out of the Spirit Hunt early, the score you would be given for your assessment for the Spirit Hunt would be extremely low.

The signal flares would be distributed to all the disciples, but food and water were prepared by the disciples themselves.

They did not restrict how much you brought and as long as you could carry the load, no one would stop you.

For the Spirit Hunt, the disciples of the Zephyr Academy were allowed to form their own groups to support each other.

And in that aspect, the disciples from the Spirit Healing faculty were the most popular choices.

Although the Spirit Healer faculty disciples were usually less proficient in battle than the other two battle focused faculties, but disciples of the other two faculties were eager to jump on this rare chance to get into the good books of a potential future Spirit Healer, and many would plead and beg for them to join their groups.

Hence, well before the day of the Spirit Hunt, all the disciples of the Spirit Healer faculty had already been taken, without a single one spared.

The strong combined with the strong and it was a common sight during the Spirit Hunt.

And among them, the strongest team was the team that comprised of the previous Spirit Tournament's second ranked Lu Wei Xie and third ranked Ning Xin, which also included Yin Yan of the Spirit Healer faculty and many other elites of the Zephyr Academy. The team totaled more than twenty people and they were perceived to be the most impressive line up the Zephyr Academy could put forth.

As a result, all the teams would welcome almost any disciples

who had not managed to find themselves a team to join.

Afterall, to survive seven days within this dense forest would not be an easy task and even if they were not strong or powerful additions, a bigger number of allies would make the task ahead easier to manage.

However.....

There were two people who did not manage to find a team to join up with.

People like.....

The last Spirit Tournament's fourth ranked Fan Jin, and Jun Xie.....

With Fan Jin's skills, many of the others would have fought tooth and nail to have him join them, but Fan Jin was tagged on with his ward, the most hated Jun Xie, which made all the other teams give up on any intentions to recruit the elite Fan Jin.

Jun Xie's name had dropped to the pits within the Zephyr Academy and even Fan Jin's popularity had not been enough to convince the other teams to want them. In the end, when all the disciples of the Zephyr Academy were split into their teams in tens or more, only Fan Jin and Jun Xie were left standing alone all by themselves.

“Cough, it does not matter if there is nobody else. Little Xie, believe in my strength. I will definitely protect you well.” Fan Jin said trying to sound comforting as he stared at the excitement all around them, while the withering quiet where they stood struck a stark contrast and he hastened to encourage Jun Xie bravely.

Chapter 448: “Is That The Weakest or Strongest Team (1)”

Jun Wu Xie looked at Fan Jin who was bravely trying to put up a smile when she suddenly turned, and walked purposefully away.

Fan Jin was not about to allow Jun Xie to roam around on his own under all those malicious stares and ran to catch up with him.

Ning Xin and Yin Yan observed Fan Jin and Jun Xie while they hid within the crowd and when they saw that the two of them were ostracised and left out, they then smiled in glee.

“Where are they going?” Ning Xin saw Jun Xie suddenly turn away and walk towards a big group of disciples.

“Those are just trash from the branch division.” Yin Yan said with contempt.

Just like the disciples of the main division, the disciples from the branch division were to take part in the Spirit Hunt as well. But the atmosphere in the branch division was the exact opposite, gloomy and dismal. Their ring spirits and spiritual powers could not be compared in any way to those disciples from the main division and having been forced to undergo the ordeal of surviving seven days within the perilous Battle Spirits Forest frightened them to no end.

The group of disciples from the branch division were still immersed in their own thoughts of inescapable doom when they suddenly saw two figures from the main division approaching them and they all stared in wide eyed disbelief.

Disciples from the main division had always treated those from the branch division with contempt and had always avoided them like the plague, and refused to even look at them at all.

And right before their eyes now, two disciples from the main division were walking straight towards the place the branch

division's disciples were gathered and all their eyes were fixed on those two figures.

As they stared at the nearing Fan Jin and Jun Xie, the disciples could not fathom what those two disciples from the main division would want from them.

“Meow~” The little black cat sat upon Jun Wu Xie's shoulders, its fluffy tail coiled behind her neck. It pointed out the direction to Jun Wu Xie and she immediately set off towards it.

Over on that side, four youths were gathered and seated under a tree, chatting among themselves.

Suddenly a tiny figure appeared before them and the four who were chatting excitedly looked up. When they saw the figure's face, the four youths suddenly went quiet, their faces filled with surprise.

“Little Xie?” Qiao Chu, who was biting one end of a blade of grass suddenly jumped up from the ground when he saw Jun Xie. He pounced unhesitatingly towards Jun Xie and was all ready to envelope him in a big bear hug.

However, Qiao Chu was suddenly stopped while he was still in mid air.

Fan Jin's face was in a deep frown, his hand extended stopping the jovial and good looking youth who had wanted to jump onto Jun Xie.

“Who are you? And what were you going to do to Jun Xie?”

“I should be the one asking just who are you?” Qiao Chu was frowning at the sudden appearance of Fan Jin. He had not seen Little Xie for so long and who was this twit to come between them?

“My name is Fan Jin, a disciple from the main division.” Fan Jin said with his brows furrowed.

Qiao Chu furrowed his brow as well and spat out the blade of

grass from his mouth to said nonchalantly: “Qiao Chu.”

Sparks flew between the two candid and unpretentious youths as their eyes met and a fight seems seemed imminent.

Fei Yan stood up right at that moment and walked over to stand beside Jun Xie, and said with a laugh: “You still remembered to come look for us. We thought you had forgotten all about us!”

Fan Jin had intended to first establish the identities of these people before he would let them interact with Jun Xie as Jun Xie had just too many enemies at that moment. But when he saw the sweetly smiling “girl”, Fei Yan greet Jun Xie so easily, he could not make himself raise his hand again to stop her.

A man must always.....

Treat ladies with gentleness and respect.

“You know each other?” Fan Jin heard Fei Yan’s words and asked Jun Xie.

“We came together to enroll into the Zephyr academy.” Rong Ruo stood up as well and said smiling.

Fan Jin turned to look at Jun Xie. And after he saw Jun Xie nod slightly to him, Fan Jin finally believed the other youths and lowered his defenses against them.

“Apologies if I’ve offended you.” After ascertaining that the other party were friendly to Jun Xie, Fan Jin’s face broke out into a jovial and amicable smile.

Chapter 449: “Is That The Weakest or Strongest Team (2)”

Jun Wu Xie very briefly introduced Fan Jin and Qiao Chu was all smiles very soon.

“Haha, many thanks to you! With you looking out for our Little Xie, we are greatly relieved.”

“No, I didn’t do much.”

After a round of courteous banter, Jun Wu Xie shot them a curious gaze and said: “Come with me into the Forest.”

“Sure! We were just about to go look for you anyway.” Qiao Chu said with a laugh.

They agreed to enter the Battle Spirits Forest together as a team in moments and the disciples from the branch division looked on as the Qiao Chu and his gang leave the tree together with Jun Xie and Fan Jin to walk towards the place where the disciples of the main division gathered, their eyes aglow, green with envy.

When the other disciples of the main division saw Fan Jin with disciples from the branch division in his team to make up some numbers, they all started laughing loudly.

“Fan Jin has fallen so low that he has to resort to scouring through the trash! What does he think those useless characters can contribute to in the Battle Spirits Forest?” Yin Yan looked at Fan Jin from afar and said with a cold laugh.

Ning Xin turned to look a brief moment and turned back immediately, hiding the glee that rose within her eyes.

“Leave him to his own struggles, the final result will still be the same anyway.”

Yin Yan smiled and his glad was gladdened by Fan Jin’s depravity.

Having the main division's disciples gather disciples from the branch division to join their team was unheard of and everyone from the main division were looking at Jun Xie's tiny team as the biggest joke, and many of them soon dubbed them "the weakest" of them all.

Qiao Chu rubbed his nose heavily as the loud whispers all around assaulted his ears. He might not been deemed to be a sensitive guy, but he could definitely sense the daggers behind all those eyes directed at their group.

"Are disciples from the branch division so badly despised?" Qiao Chu asked.

"It's nothing to do with all of you." Jun Wu Xie said without emotion.

Qiao Chu was about to say more when he saw Hua Yao shot him a glance, asking him to shut up.

The main reason behind all those loud whispers from the other disciples of the main division were largely understood by all the others and only Qiao Chu was left still thinking that those whispers were because they despised those who were from the branch division. If anyone would just listen carefully, they would know that all those whispers were targeted at Jun Xie.

"I'll say, Jun Xie. How long has it been since you were admitted into the main division and you have managed to make an enemy out of everyone?" Fei Yan who was always highly capable in gathering information had gone around within the crowd and had gathered sufficient intelligence to know exactly what the situation was then.

From what she had heard, in the eyes of all the other disciples, Jun Xie was a despicable and utterly incorrigible brat!

Jun Wu Xie was totally expressionless, but Fan Jin was the one looking slightly embarrassed instead.

“They had said that you do not show yourself much in the academy, so why is it that you would take part in the Spirit Hunt?” Fei Yan asked, out of pure curiosity, as she cared not in the least all the nasty things she had heard about Jun Xie.

Jun Wu Xie replied curtly: “To kill people.”

“.....”

“.....”

“.....”

“.....”

“.....”

Beside Jun Wu Xie, all the other five people around her stared wide eyed at the tiny figure, unable to find words to respond to Jun Xie’s emotionless and curt response.

Qiao Chu wiped the sweat that had suddenly appeared upon his forehead and said: “Little Xie..... That reason is a little..... too brutal..... Don’t you think?”

Kill people.....

My dear Jun Xie, can’t you be just a little more tactful?

“You..... you must be joking right? Fan Jin was really shocked to his boots by Jun Xie’s chilling words. The cold and expressionless little kid had just come on his first expedition organised by the academy and his only intention was so..... inconceivably brutal. He could not make himself believe that Jun Xie was really here to kill someone.

Jun Wu Xie observed the suddenly paled Fan Jin and hesitated a moment before muttering a non committal: “Mmm.”

Fan Jin then heaved a big sigh of relief.

Chapter 450: “Is That The Weakest or Strongest Team (3)”

Fan Jin was greatly relieved but Qiao Chu and gang did not believe it for a moment.

Jun Xie had learnt to kid?

That was what's more unbelievable instead!

That kid fully meant every word of that came out of the mouth and when he said he came here to kill, he meant he came here to kill and nothing else!

Qiao Chu and Hua Yao were had witnessed Jun Xie in action before and they were certain, without the slightest doubt, that Jun Xie had meant every single word he said.

She took part in the Spirit Hunt and came here today..... to kill people.

But Hua Yao and Qiao Chu kept their thoughts on Jun Xie's revelation to themselves so as not to further startle Fan Jin, and just exchanged a knowing glance between themselves.

Hua Yao shot Rong Ruo a meaningful glance and Rong Ruo quickly caught on. She walked to come before Fan Jin and said: “Big brother Fan, we still have some things we left behind in the branch division encampment. Can I trouble you to accompany me to go retrieve them? When I see the eyes of the disciples from the main division.....” Rong Ruo's handsome face was suddenly tinged with worry, as she swept her gaze around at the obviously unfriendly eyes staring at the group.

Fan Jin immediately slapped his own chest confidently and led Rong Ruo back towards the branch division's encampment to retrieve their belongings.

The moment after Fan Jin stepped away, Qiao Chu jumped

immediately to stand before Jun Xie to ask: “Little Xie, who do you want to kill?”

Qiao Chu’s eyes were bright, lit up with excitement. After the massive massacre of the Qing Yun Clan with Jun Xie the last time, Qiao Chu fell in love with that thrill and excitement that came with being with Jun Xie.

With Fan Jin around earlier, they could not be candid with Jun Xie, as Fan Jin obviously saw Jun Xie as a timid and harmless little bunny. But little did he know that the little bunny in his eyes was one that swallowed people whole without even spitting out the bones. Countless people had fallen prey to that inconspicuous tiny face, and found themselves dead and their bodies already cold before they realised what had happened.

“Don’t know.” Jun Xie replied.

“Huh?” Don’t know..... What did that mean?

Jun Wu Xie raised her hand and toyed with her little finger. “Whoever that comes, will be whoever that dies.”

It was not convenient for her to make her move within the academy, but after they entered the Battle Spirits Forest was a different ballpark altogether. She need not consider those misgivings as she had in the academy anymore and the murder in her eyes flashed chillingly. She had said, whoever it was that tried so hard to incite her to come, had better not regret it later.

She had not put in much thought to try to guess who was the one behind all that goading and incitement, she only knew one thing, and that was it did not matter who it was, what mattered was whoever dared to go against her, must be ready to face her merciless wrath!

Qiao Chu’s and Hua Yao’s faces were all smiles when they saw the same devilish face they had seen the day the whole Qing Yun Clan had been obliterated, appear before them once again.

“Not a problem. Whoever dares comes seeking their death, will have their wish granted.” Qiao Chu rubbed his hands in glee.

The intelligence that Fei Yan had gathered lit a fire in the chests of Jun Xie’s companions as they listened. They knew Jun Xie, and with his ability, not many things under the skies could catch his fancy. Those brats were accusing Jun Xie of trying to steal a lousy spot in the Spirit Healer faculty through despicable means? That’s got to be a joke!

But if so many people were seeking the deaths, they would never dream of denying them their well deserved “wishes”.

Jun Xie was all set to kill, a few more would not make much of a difference.

Jun Wu Xie stared at Qiao Chu and the gang, and nodded slightly to them.

When Fan Jin and Rong Ruo came back, Qiao Chu and the others had reverted back to their normal selves and after exchanging a few more words, the deafening sounds of drums sounded and the Zephyr Academy disciples readied themselves to enter the Battle Spirits Forest.

The teams gathered their members together as they listened to the war drums rumble, and the flags of the Zephyr Academy were raised, fluttering in the wind.

The disciples of the main division stood confidently, heads held high, chest puffed up, in high contrast to those disciples from the branch division, whose shoulders were all slumped in defeat, their almost crouching figures filled with dread.

As the last beat of the drums sounded, all the teams started their rush into the Battle Spirits Forest.

They held their torches high, the figures soon swallowed by the dark dense forest.

Many of them rushed in excited and exuberant, but who knew

how many of them would end up buried within the deep dense forest this time round.

Chapter 451: “Battle Spirits Forest (1)”

It was now late into the night and the Battle Spirits Forest was pitch dark. Jun Wu Xie and her teammates held their torches up high as they traversed through the dense trees and vegetation, lighting up the way before them.

The roars of the Spirit Beasts rang out occasionally through the darkness. In the quiet night, the myriad sounds from the forest made the whole place seem much more terrifying.

The torch in Qiao Chu’s hand was burning brightly. He swung the torch to shine onto the trees surrounding them many times and peered at the map held in his intent for a long while. He finally gave up.

“And they call this a map? Who can read it! ?” Qiao Chu shoved the map in his pocket in disgust and exclaimed loudly to his companions in exasperation.

Fan Jin had been to this forest a few times and when he heard Qiao Chu, he said with a laugh: “The map will only provide us with a general idea of the direction we are to take. Moreover, it is late in the night now and visibility is low. Even if we have a map, we will not be able to see our way clearly. Why don’t we find a place to sleep first and wait for morning to come. We will still have ample time to hunt for prey after the sun rises.”

Fan Jin was a little older than the others and he was the only one among them that had come to this forest before. Hence, the others naturally looked to him for suggestions on how they were to move within the dense forest.

“I think that will work.” Qiao Chu nodded in agreement.

“The forest is more dangerous at night and there are some nocturnal spirit beasts that will come out to hunt for food. If we do not intend to become dinner for them, I suggest we rest up high

among the trees.” Fan Jin warned gravely.

The group nodded one after another and looked around for aged trees. Their branches were broader and their canopies denser, which made them more suitable places for the companions to rest.

Fan Jin took out a coil of rope from his hip and attached a hook to one end. He was just about to throw it up when he saw Qiao Chu and his gang going up into the treetops with a quick leap!

Their movements were light and graceful and with a single bound, they reached the lower branches and they quickly went up into the higher reaches with a few more quick leaps in succession going left and right effortlessly.

Fan Jin’s eyes sparkled as his heart was overcome in awe.

He had initially thought that Jun Xie had gathered the group together just because they had previously traveled together to come to the Zephyr Academy, and even if they turn out to be weak and could not contribute much, he had prepared himself to at least keep the group safe while they were in the forest. But what he just saw told him that these youths were neither weak nor unskilled.

Under the darkness of the night, where visibility was extremely poor, his companions had still been able to locate the necessary footholds with such pinpoint accuracy to reach the upper reaches of the trees in lightning quick time, and these showed him how nimble and agile his companions really were.

Fan Jin knew for a fact that even in the main division of the Zephyr Academy, not many would be capable enough to match them in such a feat.

“Throw up the rope. We’ll haul the two of you up.” Qiao Chu was totally oblivious of the fact that their show of agility had already far surpassed any standards that disciples of the branch division were “supposed” to possess.

Fan Jin removed the hook from the end of the rope and threw

the rope's end up to Qiao Chu. "Just pull Little Xie up, I'll climb up myself." Fan Jin handed the other end of the rope to Jun Xie and she looped it around her hips, allowing Qiao Chu to pull her up into the branches. Fan Jin imitated his companions and leapt up leaping through the branches to go up into the upper reaches of the trees.

As they laid down among the higher branches well concealed from sight, everyone quietened down. The moonlight shone through the thick canopies of leaves, and the tiny rays that fell through shone on the companions, looking as if the stars had descended upon their bodies.

"Sigh, I haven't slept like this for a long time. Feels rather nostalgic." Qiao Chu was reminded of something and he mumbled with a laugh. He turned his head to one side and saw Jun Xie was on the branch just next to his and he was puzzled by what he saw Jun Xie did next.

Jun Wu Xie was not resting but she took out a porcelain bottle from her sleeves. She poured some white powder into her hand and smeared it on the branch she was leaning against. After she was done, she threw the bottle to Qiao Chu and simply said: "Many bugs, apply it."

Chapter 452: “Battle Spirits Forest (2)”

Qiao Chu did as Jun Wu Xie told him and after applying it, the bottle was passed around and everyone followed suit.

Jun Wu Xie lay down on her branch after that and the little black cat lay just above her head, its furry tail hanging over the branch, swishing back and forth.

“Meow.”

[This forest is rather similar to that place.]

Jun Wu Xie’s eyes narrowed at the memory. She spent the initial ten over years in her past life in that demon’s lair which had been situated in the middle of a dense forest just like this, in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by silence.

Refusing to think anymore of the past, Jun Wu Xie slowly closed her eyes.

When the sun first rays broke across the treetops, a scream tore through the air, causing the companions asleep among the higher reaches of the trees to startle awake.

The screaming was coming closer and the leaves on the trees were beginning to rustle.

“Spirit Beast?” Fei Yan sat up suddenly. A earsplitting beastly howl then reverberated in their ears.

Fan Jin was already sitting upright on his branch and his face was creased in a frown. “We are still at the fringes of the forest and there shouldn’t be any Spirit Beasts belonging to the higher grade around here.”

Just as Fan Jin finished his statement, several ragged figures burst through the vegetation. There were seventeen of them in total and they were dressed in uniforms of the Zephyr Academy. At that moment, they had lost all the semblance of magnificence they

had portrayed initially from being an esteemed disciple of the revered Zephyr Academy. Their faces were now covered in dirt and their clothes were all tattered. Several of them had wounds on them and their blood had stained their clothes red. But they did not seem to notice their wounds as all of them ran for their lives.

The youths were already panting heavily from their mad dash and they all hid with their backs plastered against the trees, too tired to run another step further.

The next moment, a large pack of jackals appeared, following the scent of blood. A quick count showed that there were at least more than thirty of them in the pack!

Jackals were Spirit Beasts that belonged to the lowest first grade and they were smaller in size than wolves and did not possess strong attack power. Faced with a jackal, as long as one's ring spirit had awakened, they would be able to manage defeating them without too much difficulty. But jackals were gregarious Spirits Beasts and they always moved together in packs numbering at least three or four and the number can go up into the hundreds in large packs. Each pack was always led by a leader on their hunts for food.

One lone jackal could be easily defeated, but when the numbers in the pack increased, their attack power was multiplied in folds.

The smaller bodies of the jackals meant that they were more nimble of foot. They were innately crafty and they coordinated their attacks when they hunt.

The team that had run here had really been unlucky. They had groped their way blindly through the forest throughout the night and due to the poor visibility, they had lost their way and made a huge detour. They had carelessly stumbled across this pack of jackals when the youths were already exhausted from having trekked such a long distance through treacherous terrain and dense vegetation the whole night. When they found themselves

suddenly under the attack of the jackals, many of them panic and ran for their lives. Fortunately for them, they had a few seniors in their group who had better presence of mind, and that had allowed them to run all the way out here.

But those seniors were mostly injured now and the jackals were relentless and still aggressively chasing down their prey.

“Damn it. To think that we would be pushed so hard by a pack of jackals.” A senior whose arm had been bitten by jackal said, as blood flowed down from the four deep punctures which he had hastily tied up with cloth he had torn out from his clothes.

“I..... I can’t run anymore.” One of the youth said, gasping for air, and leaning heavily against a tree.

“Zi Mu! We cannot stop!” A senior who was injured shouted, gritting his teeth against the pain.

Li Zi Mu’s mind was completely blank, and his legs were starting to cramp up from the mad dash where he had given everything he had in fear of his life, and his face was filled with utter despair.

Chapter 453: “Battle Spirits Forest (3)”

“I..... I really can’t take another step.” Li Zi Mu cried, his face mournful. He felt as if his legs were about to break off.

All the other youths were also depleted. The jackals had pursued them relentlessly half the night and they had bashed their way through the dense forest in the darkness, looking for a way out and avoiding the jackals flanking attacks. They were all at the ends of the rope both physically and mentally.

“Growl!” A jackal leapt at Li Zi Mu who was still panting heavily and the blood drained from Li Zi Mu’s face and he fell back onto the ground in fright. His hand grabbed up the stone he had felt when he fell and threw it at the leaping jackal.

The jackal was extremely agile and avoided everything Li Zi Mu threw at him, its eyes fixated on the youth he was about to pounce on.

Li Zi Mu let out a shrill scream and was still grabbing whatever he could from the ground to throw when his hand closed over something rounded and cold to the touch, and by reflex he threw it out at the jackal as well!

The quick footed jackal dodged that as well and the unidentified white item thrown fell onto the ground and broke into pieces and a white cloud blew out and dispersed into the wind!

The highly aggressive jackal smelt the scent that had spread from the white cloud and suddenly gave out a sharp shrill whine. It stopped its advance and suddenly turned around to run away, its tail in between its legs. When the scent reached the other jackals, all of them suddenly turned tail and fled whining, quickly disappearing from sight.

One moment, the disciples found themselves about to be devoured by the jackals, and the next moment, they saw the jackals

suddenly turn around and flee!

The unexpected turn of events had all the exhausted disciples stunned, and totally flabbergasted, including Li Zi Mu.

“Zi Mu, what was that that you threw out earlier?” The senior who was Li Zi Mu’s mentor asked in surprise.

“I..... “ Li Zi Mu gaped like a goldfish and his eyes finally fell on the unidentified item he had last thrown out on the ground.

Broken white porcelain pieces lay scattered and a white powdery substance could be seen on the dirt.

Li Zi Mu gulped and looked at all the other disciples staring at him.

Actually, he had been the one who had first attracted the attention of the jackals. He had been lost and had stumbled blindly into their territory. He was the one that had brought them that disaster that had almost killed them all. Even the senior that was his mentor had gotten himself bitten by the jackal to save Li Zi Mu. When the jackals had attacked, all the youths had summoned their ring spirits and they had asked Li Zi Mu to summon his as well. But Li Zi Mu had been too terrified when he saw the large number in the pack and he froze completely, incapable of any action.

As they were running for their lives, Li Zi Mu had trailed the others and dragged down the whole team. If he hadn’t been a disciple of the Spirit Healer faculty, the other disciples in the team would have long abandoned him.

Li Zi Mu knew at that moment that the whole team was dissatisfied with him, including his mentor, and he desperately needed to do something about it to improve his standing and image within the team. Afterall, they still had more than six days to go within the forest, which was filled with endless unknown dangers, and he needed the team’s protection to get through it.

“That..... That was something my father gave me. It can drive

Spirit Beasts away. I did not have the time to take it out earlier. I'm sorry I caused my seniors to get hurt." Li Zi Mu looked at the others guiltily and claimed the life saving treasure he had carelessly picked up to be his own without shame.

The other youths had been rather displeased with Li Zi Mu, and when they heard Li Zi Mu say he had been the one who had driven the jackals off, they decided not to pursue the matter further. They still harboured a little displeasure but the fact remained that Li Zi Mu was after all a disciple of the Spirit Healer faculty and they gave in in the end.

They did not want to burn all bridges with potential Spirit Healer and the other disciples forced themselves to accept Li Zi Mu's apology.

Chapter 454: “Consecutive Slaps – First Form (1)”

Down below the trees, Li Zi Mu was trying desperately to gain back a little of his reputation. He was completely unaware that his every action was being closely scrutinised by the people high up among the higher reaches of the tall trees.

“Qiao Chu! The bottle that that kid threw out earlier, wasn’t it the same bottle that Jun Xie handed to all of us last night?” Fei Yan’s sharp eyes saw the broken porcelain pieces on the ground and turned his head to asked Qiao Chu.

Qiao Chu squinted his eyes and said: “After using it last night, I asked Jun Xie if he wanted it back and he told me no. I just slipped it into my clothes and I guessed it must have dropped out while I was sleeping.”

“Oh..... I thought the disciples from the main division were always acting all high and mighty before us but it seems that it’s not beneath them to be capable of stealing credit when it’s not due to them. When did things that belonged to our Little Xie become his?” Fei Yan said with his eyes narrowed, feeling extremely disgruntled that Li Zi Mu had claimed Jun Xie’s medicated powder as his own so shamelessly.

Jun Wu Xie was observing Li Zi Mu silently as he claimed all the credit from his fellow teammates.

“Little Xie, you know him?” Seeing the way Jun Xie was staring at Li Zi Mu, Fei Yan’s keen eyes seemed to notice something.

Jun Wu Xie did not reply but it was Fan Jin who cleared his throat lightly instead to say: “That boy below us is Li Zi Mu, and he wasn’t too friendly to Jun Xie in the academy.”

Fan Jin was being very reserved with his choice of words, Li Zi Mu had merely been unfriendly to Jun Xie! ?

It could be said that the reason that Jun Xie had to suffer under all those curses and admonishments from the other disciples so badly in the academy, had all started when Li Zi Mu had cooked up such a story in the dining hall in the beginning.

If Li Zi Mu had just told the truth then, Jun Xie would not have had to be seen to be a despicable and scheming scoundrel.

“Oh?” Fei Yan’s eyes narrowed dangerously.

Hua Yao had already stood up on his branch and he turned to look at Jun Xie to ask: “Him?”

Jun Wu Xie was silent a moment before the words came out of her mouth:

“We’ll start with him.”

Hua Yao and the others suddenly had a glint in their eyes and only Fan Jin was still rather lost, not understanding what Jun Xie intended to do. And before he could open his mouth to ask what was happening, Hua Yao and the others had already leapt off from the branches!

Li Zi Mu was busy trying to get his teammates to warm up to him. The ring spirits belonging to several of his seniors had also sustained injuries and they asked Li Zi Mu to heal them with his Spirit Healing technique.

However, Li Zi Mu repeatedly refused their requests, an expression of reluctance on his face.

“Li Zi Mu! What do you mean by this! ? Our ring spirits are hurt because we had to save you and now that we ask for a little healing for them, you are rejecting us so adamantly! What is the meaning of this! ?” A fiery youth within the team could not hold back his anger and shouted at Li Zi Mu.

Li Zi Mu turned pale and hid his head between his shoulders without saying a word.

He had been with the Spirit Healer faculty for some time and Gu Li Sheng had been extremely caring to him. That had made Li Zi Mu become very conceited initially. But his conceit had not lasted long as he soon found that no matter how hard he tried, he could never grasp the concept of Spirit Healing itself. Even after being in the Spirit Healer faculty for so long, not to mention healing a ring spirit, Li Zi Mu did not even know how to convert his spiritual power into spiritual energy. And due to the excessive attention Gu Li Sheng showered upon him, all the seniors in the Spirit Healer faculty detested him. Li Zi Mu was reduced to only being able to show off in front of the other disciples from the two other faculties who knew nothing of his incompetence.

And anyone who knew what was really happening under all that pretense, completely despised and ignored him.

And now, his teammates were asking him to heal their ring spirits with the Spirit Healing technique, how was he going to do it? If his teammates got to know how useless he really was, they would definitely give him the boot without a moment's hesitation!

Chapter 455: “Consecutive Slaps – First Form (2)”

Li Zi Mu still refused to answer his teammates when right at that moment, several figures fell from above, landing on the ground right before their eyes!

The sudden appearance of the those figures shocked the exhausted youths.

But when they managed to see them clearly in the next moment, their startled hearts calmed back to normal.

Those figures were dressed in uniforms that showed they belonged to the branch division of the Zephyr Academy and when all the others saw clearly that the figures were just the disciples from the inferior branch division, their faces creased into deep frowns immediately.

However, the two other figures that descended right after, greatly surprised the other youths

When Jun Wu Xie and Fan Jin landed on the ground, Li Zi Mu who had been sitting on the ground suddenly jumped up. He surveyed Jun Xie’s clean and spotless clothes and when he saw Fan Jin standing protectively next to Jun Xie, an inexplicable surge of jealousy came upon him.

He felt that he was obviously the one that really deserved protection and why would the last Spirit Tournament’s fourth ranked Fan Jin protect Jun Xie so much?

Before this, Li Zi Mu had not felt this way before. But he and his team were chased by a huge pack of jackals throughout the night and many of them were covered in wounds, and he had to still swallow his pride and resort to sucking up to his teammates after all this. And what about Jun Xie? He was still safe and sound under Fan Jin’s protection without having suffered a single scratch, and

his clothes had not even been creased!

If right from the beginning, Jun Xie had not been here, there wouldn't have been the farce about the stealing of the position at the Spirit Healing faculty and Fan Jin might just have taken him under his wing instead!

And if Fan Jin was his mentor, he would be safe from any dangers within the Battle Spirits Forest! When he saw Jun Xie and the several other disciples from the branch division with Fan Jin all looking well rested and still clean, he suddenly felt insanely jealous.

Those thoughts filled Li Zi Mu's mind completely and his eyes that were staring at Jun Xie suddenly became vicious.

"Senior Fan! This is my first time here at the Battle Spirits Forest and am extremely unfamiliar with the surroundings. Can I follow and walk with you from here on? I might not have strong spiritual powers but my ring spirit and Spirit Healing technique would be a great help to you. Would you allow me to tag along with you?" Li Zi Mu had decided he wanted to cling on to the highly skilled Fan Jin and he could not care any less that he was saying all this before his current teammates. He strongly believed that if he hung around Fan Jin long enough, Fan Jin would undoubtedly realise that a Spirit Healer faculty disciple like him was better than Jun Xie in every way!

After Li Zi Mu said that, Fan Jin did not react. However, the senior who mentored Li Zi Mu suddenly found his rage rise!

"Li Zi Mu! You are such a despicable and ungrateful brat!" He had almost been maimed trying to save Li Zi Mu but Li Zi Mu had cleanly forgotten what he had done for him the moment Fan Jin had appeared. He had never met anyone more self centered than Li Zi Mu!

Li Zi Mu gritted his teeth and did not even turn back to face his mentor but continued to look pleadingly at Fan Jin.

Fan Jin stared at Li Zi Mu with a deep frown on his face and his expression was one of utter disgust. The kind of people he had always hated to the core were ungrateful scoundrels just like this.

Fan Jin had acutely noticed after the attack from the pack of jackals, the whole team was looking to be in bad shape, all bruised and battered and their clothes all tattered and torn. But Li Zi Mu on the other hand, did not have a scratch on him compared to the bloody wounds seen on his teammates. It was fairly obvious that the team had been looking out for his safety and Li Zi Mu had so indifferently turned around and asked to switch teams..... How big of a jerk was he?!

Chapter 456: “Consecutive Slaps – First Form (3)”

Before Fan Jin could say a word, Jun Wu Xie suddenly said: “Bring him along.”

Jun Xie’s sudden words stunned everyone into silence.

Fan Jin could not believe his ears. Did Jun Xie just said to bring Li Zi Mu along? The same scoundrel, Li Zi Mu, who had caused Jun Xie’s days in the Zephyr Academy to become hell and Jun Xie was agreeing for him to join up with them ! ?

Li Zi Mu was just as shocked as he looked at Jun Xie. He had guessed that Fan Jin would accept him and Jun Xie would definitely object. Never would he have expected that Jun Xie would be the first one to agree!

Even the other youths in Li Zi Mu’s team were flabbergasted as they stared at Jun Xie in incredulity.

They knew very well the “grudges” between Jun Xie and Li Zi Mu. Jun Xie had resorted to hiding himself within the bamboo grove and not come out for a long time and Li Zi Mu had not stopped trying to gain sympathy borrowing on the prior incident with Jun Xie. They knew those two people were bitter enemies.

And Jun Xie was asking Fan Jin to accept Li Zi Mu just like that?

The other youths were deeply puzzled and confused.

Jun Wu Xie shot Fan Jin a glance and the rejection that had been on the tip of his tongue was hastily swallowed. Fan Jin recomposed himself and said to Li Zi Mu instead: “You can come with me, but you better pull your socks up! Or I will throw you to feed the Spirit Beasts!” Fan Jin was most unwilling to take in that ungrateful jerk but he could not stand up to the cold glance that Jun Xie gave him, and he had finally succumbed.

Li Zi Mu smiled happily at that moment and thanked Fan Jin profusely, and he totally ignored Jun Xie who had been the first one to say he could stay.

Jun Wu Xie only lowered her eyes and did not say a word.

The other youths who had been “betrayed” by Li Zi Mu were going to leave in rage but Jun Wu Xie suddenly spoke and threw a few medicine bottles to them.

“Treat your wounds.” Jun Wu Xie said without emotion.

The youths caught the bottles and looked at Jun Xie in confusion. They could not comprehend why Jun Xie would do that as they knew they had been party to cursing Jun Xie behind his back. And now that they were abandoned by one of their own, it was Jun Xie whom they had cursed at so vehemently that had extended his hand to help.....

“Li Zi Mu is not a simple guy, you..... watch your back.” The senior who had mentored Li Zi Mu gripped the medicine in his hand and stared at Jun Xie a moment to offer his friendly warning before turning to leave with his remaining teammates.

And that short interaction with Jun Wu Xie had planted a subtle seed in the hearts of all those youths.

“The wise bends according to changing circumstances, Senior Fan. You are so highly skilled and I thought of learning from the birds, where they find a stronger branch to perch from.” Li Zi Mu ignored the words of his former teammates completely and was only focused on sticking himself close to Fan Jin’s side.

Fan Jin’s expression got darker and darker and he still could not understand what Jun Xie really wanted to do.

“Sigh, what a dumb block.” A voice filled with sarcasm sounded suddenly with a laugh.

Li Zi Mu turned his head to look.

Fei Yan was smiling as he looked at Li Zi Mu with pity.

Li Zi Mu frowned. A disciple from the branch division dared to act so arrogantly before him !?

“Qiao Chu, Brother Hua.” After making sure that the other youths had completely left, Jun Wu Xie tilted her head and said to Hua Yao and Qiao Chu.

Hua Yao’s mouth curled sinisterly at the corners and Qiao Chu bumped his fists together and replied together: “Understood!”

Fan Jin was still trying to decipher what Jun Xie’s real intentions were when a pitiful scream sounded right beside him!

Li Zi Mu had been trying very hard to impress him and was standing by his side just a moment ago when in a blink, he saw that Hua Yao and Qiao Chu had both grabbed Li Zi Mu by a shoulder each and were holding him pressed down against the tree just behind him.

Chapter 457: “Consecutive Slaps – First Form (4)”

Li Zi Mu found himself suddenly grabbed by two others and slammed hard against a tree. He felt as if his spine had almost snapped from the impact upon the sharp jagged tree trunk and he suddenly felt nauseated.

“ARRGGHH! What are you doing?! Let me go! I’ll have you know I’m a disciple of the Spirit Healer faculty! How dare you treat me with such disrespect !? When we get back to the academy, I’ll teach you pieces of trash some manners !” Li Zi Mu’s eyes were wide open. He stared in disbelief at the sudden attack from Hua Yao and Qiao Chu.

The sudden assault left Fan Jin shocked and he stood rooted to the ground. He turned reflexively to look at Jun Xie, his eyes filled with horror and unease.

“If you cannot bear to watch, you can go somewhere else first.” Jun Wu Xie looked at Fan Jin a moment and she turned to walk towards Li Zi Mu.

Fan Jin felt his heart skipped a beat. Something in his heart was telling him that those words Jun Xie had said before entering the Battle Spirits Forest had not been a joke at all!

And he was about to go fulfil the prophecy of those very words!

“Little Xie!” Fan Jin subconsciously grabbed Jun Xie’s arm, looking at him in terror.

However, when he saw Jun Xie’s unnaturally chilly eyes looking back at him, he found his grip loosening involuntarily.

On the other side, Li Zi Mu was screaming incessantly and Fei Yan ambled over casually, raised his hand, and slapped Li Zi Mu across the face a few times.

“What are you screaming for? The result is still death, save your energy.”

Li Zi Mu was dizzy from the slaps, and the handprints were red on his face. He trembled as he looked at Fei Yan to ask: “What..... what are you going to..... to do.....”

Fei Yan shrugged and took a step back, to allow Jun Xie enough space to stand right before Li Zi Mu.

At the moment Li Zi Mu’s eyes fell upon Jun Xie, both his legs crumbled. The pair of eyes staring at him sent chills up his spine with its undisguised murderous intent. Even a fool would be able to tell that Jun Xie had every intention to kill him.

“Jun..... Jun Xie..... wha..... What do you want.....” Li Zi Mu was sweating profusely, he found it difficult to breathe under the gaze of those chillingly frosty eyes.

“I stole your spot right?” Jun Wu Xie asked, her eyebrow raised.

Li Zi Mu shook his head vigorously. “No..... no..... Master had explained it all to me..... I did not mean it and I was wrong..... It has nothing to do with you.....”

“But that was not what you were telling everybody else.” Jun Wu Xie said, her head tilted as if in query, as she stared at Li Zi Mu’s face, completely drained of colour.

Li Zi Mu panicked. He had spread those malicious rumours to attract more attention to himself. But if he had known that he would end up in Jun Xie’s hands like this, he would never have spoken a single word against him!

“I am sorry, I am really sorry..... I beg you to spare me, I promise that I will never spout such nonsense ever again! I will clear everything up when we get back. I had lied, and you are completely innocent! I guarantee it! I will tell them everything! I will apologise! I am sorry!” Li Zi Mu was pleading with tears and mucus running down his face. He prayed that Fan Jin would save him but

Fan Jin just stood on one side, unmoving, his head lowered and silent, having no intention of interfering.

And these disciples from the branch division, were obviously on the same side as Jun Xie, or they wouldn't have grabbed him so suddenly, with just a single command from Jun Xie.

“I beg you, let me go.....”

Jun Wu Xie looked on indifferently as Li Zi Mu pleaded and begged, and she could not find it within herself to give him any sympathy.

“If you let me go, I..... I will obey your every word henceforth. I am a disciple of the Spirit Healer faculty and I know Spirit Healing. I will serve under you” Li Zi Mu brought up the Spirit Healer faculty once again, in an attempt to save his own life.

Chapter 458: “Consecutive Slaps – First Form (5)”

“Master gives me a lot of attention. I..... I will plead with him to allow you to be admitted into the Spirit Healer faculty..how about you let me go now?” Li Zi Mu was trembling visibly from fright.

Jun Wu Xie’s eyebrow arched.

“You will plead with him?”

Li Zi Mu thought that there was still room for negotiation when Jun Wu Xie said those words and he said hurriedly: “I’ll plead with him! Master dotes on me the most! If I ask him, he is sure to agree!”

Jun Wu Xie paid Li Zi Mu no attention and turned to Qiao Chu. “Summon the Yin Yang Bear.”

Qiao Chu was shocked. His Yin Yang Bear had not fully recovered from its injuries and was still very weak. He did not know what Jun Xie intended to do but he did as told and summoned the Yin Yang Bear.

When the furry Yin Yang Bear was summoned, it looked rather dispirited. Its enormous body leaned heavily onto the vegetation on its side, crushing several large bushes under its huge form.

“Grr.....” It felt someone approach and the Yin Yang Bear raised its head wearily. When it saw and recognized that it was the little youth who loved to rub himself on its stomach, it then closed its eyes and went back to its slumber.

Jun Wu Xie raised her hand and a faint glow covered her palm. She put her hand gently over the Yin Yang Bear’s head and the soft glow slowly spread itself over the Yin Yang Bear’s entire body till it completely enveloped the huge form.

Qiao Chu looked at Jun Xie curiously as he did not know what

was going on. But Li Zi Mu's eyes were bulging, his face in total disbelief as he stared at the scene before his eyes.

He could not count the number of times he had seen this before. Every time that Gu Li Sheng had instructed him on the Spirit Healing Technique, he would always demonstrate it on a ring spirit. And he could remember everything clearly after the countless times he had seen it. And the scene before his eyes was exactly the same!

“Spirit Healing technique..... Spirit Healing..... You know the Spirit Healing technique..... How..... how can this be.....” Li Zi Mu's face turned completely white. He might not know how to execute the Spirit Healing technique, but he could at least recognise it.

Jun Xie was just a disciple who had been driven out of the Spirit Healer faculty on the first day! He had been in the faculty barely hours, how could he possibly have learnt the Spirit Healing technique!?

Gu Li Sheng had said it before. For disciples like them who at most had just been introduced to the Spirit Healing technique for a few years, would only be able to lend healing to ring spirits belonging to the third grade and below. If the ring spirit belonged to a grade higher than that, the spiritual power within their bodies would not be able to sustain the amount of consumption required to heal those ring spirits.

Li Zi Mu did not know exactly what grade the massive black and white bear before his eyes belonged to, but he had distinctly felt, at the moment the Yin Yang Bear had appeared, the ring spirit within his body whine and whimper in terror.

For the Yin Yang Bear to have made his fifth grade ring spirit cower in fright, the Yin Yang Bear must belong to a grade that was higher.

And Jun Xie was able to heal a ring spirit beyond the fifth grade

so effortlessly here. That level of skill, was way beyond what useless trash like Li Zi Mu could ever dream of, and not even for the top disciple in the Spirit Healer faculty!

“Impossible..... It’s impossible..... How could you know the Spirit Healing technique..... It is just not possible.....” Li Zi Mu’s already white face was turning green with shock. And an unshakable feeling of doom was creeping slowly into his heart.

If Jun Xie truly knew the Spirit Healing technique, the rumours he had spread about Jun Xie earlier would make him the biggest joke!

The Yin Yang Bear was gradually showing visible signs of recovery and was feeling stronger. It slowly began to sit up, straight and towering. Jun Wu Xie retracted her hand and turned to look at Li Zi Mu, whose face was completely drained of blood. She curled up the corners of her mouth and asked softly: “You think I need you?”

Chapter 459: “Consecutive Slaps – First Form (6)”

Li Zi Mu’s teeth started chattering under Jun Wu Xie’s frosty gaze.

‘Jun Xie yearned to learn the Spirit Healing technique? He was such a joke!’

Li Zi Mu finally realised it now. The words he had said when he had pleaded to be spared. Those words sounded so funny now. With the skills Jun Xie had displayed with Spirit Healing here, it was not inferior to Gu Li Sheng’s. And with Jun Xie possessing such skills, Jun Xie did not need him to plead with Gu Li Sheng at all.

All his strength left Li Zi Mu then. He hung limply, only held up by Hua Yao and Qiao Chu on two sides, and his eyes were filled with dejection.

He had given everything he had, in pursuit of what he wanted but it turned out Jun Xie had it in him all this time. He found himself a joke when the very person he had tried to destroy with whatever means possible, and it turned out Jun Xie was so many times stronger than he was. Why had he been so obsessed with being in the Spirit Healer faculty? He had gotten himself admitted, and so what? He was still a useless piece of trash that had absolutely no idea how to use the Spirit Healing technique!

All those flattering and fawning voices sounded in his head at that moment. Those very same voices that had made Li Zi Mu so pleased with himself in self conceit, now made him hang his head in shame.

The skill that Jun Xie had shown in his Spirit Healing had felt like a slap across his face, smashing Li Zi Mu’s false pride to pieces.

He had not learnt anything, and it had been purely because that

he was accepted into the Spirit Healer faculty that everyone else had put him high up on a pedestal. Even under Gu Li Sheng's meticulous teachings and instructions, he had still amounted to nothing.

While Jun Xie who had already possessed such extraordinary skill in Spirit Healing, was subjected to suffer under everyone's wrath just because of a misunderstanding during his enrollment into the academy.

Li Zi Mu had thought he was better than Jun Xie in every single way, but the exact opposite had instead been true. While he had been cluelessly absorbed in his own conceit, Jun Xie must have seen him as the biggest joke alive.

Jun Wu Xie walked slowly towards Li Zi Mu, and LI Zi Mu could not help but shiver like a leaf in the wind, while his face was drained of colour, and his eyes stared widened, unable to take his eyes off Jun Xie.

“Don't..... don't..... come here.....” Li Zi Mu's voice trembled and he felt the terror overwhelm him completely. He suddenly turned his head and looked in Fan Jin's direction and shouted: “Senior Fan! Save me! Jun Xie wants to kill me! He is going to kill me! Arrrgghhh! I am a disciple of the Spirit Healer faculty! If I am to die, my Master was not let the matter rest easy!”

The murderous intent in Jun Wu Xie's eyes terrified him and Li Zi Mu only had Fan Jin to plead to.

Fan Jin's brow furrowed and he raised his head to look at Li Zi Mu.

“In actual fact, Gu Li Sheng had chosen Jun Xie right from the start. And due to some reasons, Jun Xie cannot be seen to be within the Spirit Healer faculty. You were just someone Gu Li Sheng randomly picked to be used as a cover for his initial words. If you had not spread such malicious rumours about Jun Xie, you would have been able to remain with the Spirit Healer faculty and

none of this would have happened. You should not have intentionally caused such harm to others, just to justify your own vanity.”

Fan Jin would have pitied Li Zi Mu, but when he thought of all that Li Zi Mu had done, he suddenly could not find it within himself to spare Li Zi Mu any sympathy.

Jun Xie might have a cold personality, but he had a mind of his own and was not easily swayed. He was fiercely independant, of both mind and body.

If the same thing had happened to other disciples, they most probably would have left the Zephyr Academy.

And by leaving the Zephyr Academy, they would have killed their own chance for success. When Li Zi Mu had so maliciously spread those rumours throughout the academy, had he ever thought he was going to ruin a person’s future?

A rumour repeated often enough was seen as fact, and countless people have died under the toxicity of a mere rumour!

“Wh..... What.....” Li Zi Mu was at a total loss for words. He would never have ever thought, that the truth of the matter would be anything like this!

Chapter 460: “Consecutive Slaps – First Form (7)”

“You finally understand, it was actually Jun Xie who gave you that rare chance, you did not have what they wanted at the Spirit Healer faculty.” Fan Jin looked at Li Zi Mu, his face forlorn and depressed.

Li Zi Mu’s mouth just gaped open, unable to say a word.

He was admitted into the Spirit Healer faculty because of Jun Xie, and he had still told such slanderous lies about him.....

“Just to let you know, the bottle that you threw at the jackals earlier, belonged to Little Xie as well.” Qiao Chu said with a smile, unable to resist taking another jibe at the despondent figure before him.

Li Zi Mu cowered lower.

“Stepping upon others to elevate your own status, this scoundrel seems really good at it.” Fei Yan said, giving a sideways glare at Li Zi Mu, who was so terrified that he was about to pee in his pants.

“I’m sorry..... I really am..... I realise my mistake..... I beg you..... Don’t kill me..... I will do whatever you tell me.....” His pride and ego had been stripped and trampled, Li Zi Mu only felt terror like never before, every single pore on him screamed in terror.

However.....

Jun Wu Xie was not about to accept his apology, she stared at Li Zi Mu, as she would a dead person.

“Summon your ring spirit.” Jun Wu Xie said.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry.....” Li Zi Mu was ranting subconsciously.

Fei Yan was highly irked by his ramblings and delivered a heavy punch onto his stomach!

“Oof!”

A mouthful of blood gushed out from Li Zi Mu’s mouth immediately! The blood was mixed with some unidentifiable substance from within Li Zi Mu’s body.

Qiao Chu gulped loudly. Fei Yan had possessed extraordinary strength from a very young age. That strike had only been hardly a third of Fei Yan’s full strength and Li Zi Mu was already in such a bad shape.

“Stop, don’t hit me..... I’ll summon it, I’ll summon it.....” That one strike had made him sustained heavy injuries. Li Zi Mu was crying in pain as he summoned his ring spirit in the next moment.

Li Zi Mu might be as useless as trash, but his ring spirit was of a rather good grade.

A silvery white wolf ring spirit appeared before their eyes. At the same moment the Silver Wolf appeared, Li Zi Mu’s eyes suddenly turned vicious. The Silver Wolf leapt quick as lightning at Jun Wu Xie, its huge jaws wide open, aimed straight at Jun Wu Xie’s throat!

And with a sudden white flash, pure white light exploded from Jun Wu Xie’s hand. The white flash of light leapt to meet the leaping silver wolf head on!

“Hooowl !!” The Silver Wolf suddenly howled pitifully.

A slightly pink cheeked youth had appeared suddenly. He cut a dashing handsome figure and his pure white robes billowed. He held a wine jar in one hand and the other was holding the silver wolf up in mid air, grabbing it by its neck. The pair of beautiful eyes were half closed in drunkenness and his face was one that showed utter contempt.

“Tsk, I was wondering..... Just a fifth grade silver wolf and you dare to even think of striking my Mistress!? You must really hate living, don’t you ?” Drunk Lotus smirked and his half closed eyes

flashed with chilling murder. He closed his grip on the Silver Wolf's neck and the Silver Wolf struggled violently in vain, and not a sound could even come out through its constricted throat.

The white robed youth who had suddenly appeared made Li Zi Mu's face pale with shock once again. He had placed his last bet on his silver wolf and he did not expect that with his fifth grade silver wolf coupled with the element of surprise would be so easily stopped by the youth, and with one hand yet!

His last hope completely dashed, Li Zi Mu stared at Drunk Lotus in despair, his eyes glazed.

"Give up?" Jun Wu Xie raised her head and stared at Li Zi Mu.

"I..... I..... I'm sorry..... I won't dare do it again....." His silver wolf was still gripped in Drunk Lotus' hand and Li Zi Mu could only see doom before him.

"Little Black." Jun Wu Xie called out coldly.

"Kill him."

Just as Jun Wu Xie finished her statement, the little black cat upon her shoulders jumped off and morphed into its massive black beast form, and leapt straight at the suddenly screaming Li Zi Mu!

Chapter 461: “Consecutive Slaps – First Form (8)”

At the moment the black beast pounced, Hua Yao and Qiao Chu jumped away from Li Zi Mu. The screaming Li Zi Mu had not even managed to see the black beast clearly when he found himself pinned once again, this time on the ground. The black beast's jaws opened and bit down on Li Zi Mu's neck. A loud “crunch” sounded and the shrill scream stopped at that moment!

Blood gushed out through the black beast's fangs and splattered all over the dirt turning it red and sticky.

“You still want this?” Drunk Lotus was still dangling the silver wolf as he turned to Jun Wu Xie. Li Zi Mu was dead and it wouldn't be long before the Silver Wolf would fade back into the Spirit World. If Jun Wu Xie wanted to make use of the Silver Wolf to achieve a breakthrough in her spiritual power, she had to do it fast.

Jun Wu Xie nodded and Drunk Lotus hung the wine jar at his hips. He looped an arm around Jun Wu Xie waist and loped easily up the tallest tree, disappearing from everybody's sight in mere moments, hidden among the thick branches and dense leaves.

The black beast let go of Li Zi Mu's neck and sat under the tree, licking its paws with its bloodied tongue.

Everything had happened so quickly and Fan Jin did not have time to react at all, and he just stood there staring blankly at the black beast sitting under the tree.

He had always thought that Jun Xie's ring spirit had been an ordinary black cat and it did not possess any battle prowess. And when the little black cat had morphed into the black beast, he had been so shocked that he had froze!

What grade would a ring spirit who can change its form at will

belong to? He dared not even think about it.

At that moment, Fan Jin realised that he knew nothing about Jun Xie. His strength, his ring spirit, his unfathomable and profound knowledge of Medicine.....

“What is Little Xie doing?” Qiao Chu craned his neck to look up into the trees. But Drunk Lotus must have taken extra effort to hide from them as he could not see any sign of them among the trees, not even their shadows.

The rest of the gang just shrugged their shoulders, as they did not mind whatever Jun Xie intended to do.

“You got a big fright?” Hua Yao walked to come beside Fan Jin, and he raised his hand to pat him on the shoulder in comfort, from the perspective of someone who had been through whatever Fan Jin was feeling at that moment.

Fan Jin shook his head vigorously as he sat on the side, unable to squeeze a single word out of his throat.

Li Zi Mu’s body was still lying under the tree, his neck snapped in two by the black beast. The mess of blood and gore filled his mind as did the sight of the large widening pool of blood, slowly staining the ground devilishly red.

“Was he really shocked?” Qiao Chu whispered to Rong Ruo as he came to stand beside her, lowering his voice to not let Fan Jin hear him.

Rong Ruo laughed softly: “When you suddenly see a tiny bunny turn into a big bad wolf, you would usually need a little bit of time to properly digest it.”

Jun Xie’s young age and petite size would make people assume him to be completely harmless. But in actual fact, that tiny bunny when provoked, its ferocity would put many large vicious beasts to shame.

Fan Jin’s reaction had been exactly like that. He had always

taken the role of a protector with Jun Xie, and had intended to continue protecting him throughout the time they would be in the Battle Spirits Forest. But..... the person he was protecting..... seemed to be quite a tad bit more ferocious than him.....

Besides the fact that Jun Xie had already attained the orange level in his spiritual power, just the black beast alone would be more than what most people could handle, and not forgetting, there was also that white robed youth.....

Fan Jin's fragile little heart took quite a hit at that moment.....

He had fully intended to take on the role as Jun Xie's protector!

Up in the tree, Drunk Lotus gingerly put Jun Wu Xie down on a wide branch, to allow her space to sit crossed legged, in a meditation pose, while he held the twitching Silver Wolf and stood quietly at the side.

It was just yesterday, that Jun Wu Xie had completely healed the Snow Lotus, and that had allowed Drunk Lotus to appear in all his blinding glory today.

"How do you use this?" Drunk Lotus shook the Silver Wolf a little when he saw that only the whites of the wolf's eyes was showing. Although he knew that Jun Wu Xie needed to devour a ring spirit to attain a breakthrough in her spiritual power, however, he had no idea how to go about doing it.

Jun Wu Xie retrieved the Spirit Prison from the cosmos sack, and gave it a slight twist. The Silver Wolf in Drunk Lotus' hand suddenly felt as if an invisible force was pulling at it, and it was gradually sucked into the pristine and crystalline sphere.

Chapter 462: “Consecutive Slaps – First Form (9)”

When Jun Wu Xie had achieved a breakthrough in her spiritual power the first time, she had absorbed the Soaring Serpent. It had been extremely difficult for her that time and Jun Wu Xie had prepared herself for it, and she got Drunk Lotus stay by her side to stand guard for her.

After closing the Spirit Prison, Jun Wu Xie took a deep breath. Just like she did the last time, she turned the top of the Spirit Prison, and closed her eyes, absorbing the spirit's essence emanating from the Spirit Prison into her body.

However, the absorption this time was a lot smoother and it did not cause her much discomfort. Jun Wu Xie devoured the Silver Wolf's spirit completely and felt the power permeating throughout her entire body, and the remnants of bitterness from the Silver Wolf made one feel surprisingly satisfied.

The process was smooth that the absorption left Jun Wu Xie feeling a little concerned. Little did she know that a fifth grade Silver Wolf could not even begin to compared with the Soaring Serpent in the least.

When she had devoured the Soaring Serpent the first time, if it had not been for Jun Wu Yao who stayed by her side, it would have been impossible for Jun Wu Xie to completely absorb the Soaring Serpent. And after Jun Wu Xie had experienced having devoured the mighty Soaring Serpent, devouring a mere fifth grade ring spirit would no longer pose a challenge.

Jun Wu Xie merely used about two hours' time to fully absorb the Silver Wolf's spirit cleanly. After the Silver Wolf's spirit was completely devoured, a yellow glow flared menacingly from Jun Wu Xie's entire body. The explosive flare of yellow light pierced right through the densely overlapping leaves from the canopies of

the trees, enveloping the area in a bright warm glow!

Qiao Chu and the others were waiting patiently below the tree when they suddenly felt the waves of spiritual power rippling through the air. They raised their heads to look up immediately and were immensely shocked when they saw the yellow light shining strongly through the leaves high up in the trees.

“Yellow spirit..... Little Xie has broken through to the yellow spirit so quickly!!” Qiao Chu’s eyes were wide. If his memory served him correctly, Jun Xie was only fourteen this year and his ring spirit had just awoken not long before. And now, he had already attained the yellow spirit in such a short period of time?

Although Qiao Chu and his gang were able to execute the power of a purple spirit, the effect was just temporary. They had actually used a method that had existed in the Middle Realm to gain the power of a purple spirit for a short period of time, and it was Jun Xie’s abnormally fast speed in her increase of power that really amazed them.

A fourteen year old orange spirit already had people tongue tied, if people got to know that Jun Xie had broken through to the yellow level.....

Qiao Chu swallowed subconsciously, as he turned to the only “normal” person among them, to look at Fan Jin.

Fan Jin’s face was overcome with utter shock. His jaw dropped, his eyes bulged and he stood still as stone. The “statue’s” head was craned all the way back, staring up into the tall trees, as if frozen in time.

Fan Jin was rather talented, having broken through to the yellow level at seventeen, and was considered to be well gifted and rarely seen. Jun Xie was years younger than he was and was already evenly matched to him when his ring spirit had just awoken not too long ago. He wouldn’t call that gifted, that was just devilishly monstrous!

Fan Jin's self esteem was suddenly severely devastated!

Moments later, Drunk Lotus came down from the tree with Jun Wu Xie, his pure white flowy robes and graceful descent making him look like a deity had just descended.

Drunk Lotus and Jun Xie had returned, but the Silver Wolf that Drunk Lotus had brought up with him was nowhere in sight. Qiao Chu and the others estimated the time they had been gone and thought that the Silver Wolf must have returned to the Spirit World and they did not probe any further on it.

“What are we going to do with this?” Qiao Chu asked as he kicked at Li Zi Mu's lifeless body. The other youths had seen Li Zi Mu go with Fan Jin and Jun Xie when they left. If anyone were to find Li Zi Mu's body here, it might be difficult to explain themselves.

“Leave him.” Jun Wu Xie said as she glanced at Li Zi Mu's body and then continued: “We are here to hunt for Spirit Beasts, and the Spirit Beasts are sure to fight back.”

Chapter 463: “Being Cute Has Its Perks (1)”

It finally dawned on Qiao Chu why Jun Xie had asked the black beast to kill Li Zi Mu. Jun Xie had planned this right from the start.

It was a fact, that in the Battle Spirits Forest, disciples were often attacked by the Spirit Beasts. And if they did not dodge in time, quite a number of them would lose their lives here.

In the eyes of all the others from the main division, this puny team of theirs was the weakest among them all. The only one who would be deemed capable was only Fan Jin, but Fan Jin alone would not be able to protect all of them from harm.

Hence, Li Zi Mu’s death would become plausible.

“Vicious, that’s just vicious.” Qiao Chu almost prostrated himself before Jun Xie’s deep and complex mind. Jun Xie must have already thought the whole thing through the moment he had first agreed to allow Li Zi Mu to join their team.

Jun Wu Xie looked at Qiao Chu, her face expressionless, and did not say a word.

She had been more concerned on her breakthrough in her spiritual power. Before devouring the Silver Wolf, she had been stuck at the orange level’s bottleneck for rather long. Over this period, she had continued to absorb spiritual energy but the level had not increased. And with this breakthrough, it had suddenly released all that stored and pent up spiritual energy within her body and pushed her spiritual power up explosively. Although she had just broken through to the yellow level, she could faintly feel that she was not too far off from green.

The pace at which her powers were increasing, was downright alarming.

Jun Wu Xie gripped the Spirit Prison within her hand tightly. If

the chance presented itself, she wouldn't mind devouring another ring spirit before the Spirit Hunt ended.

Jun Wu Xie did not tell the others of her intentions, and they moved out after discussing their way forward a little.

The Battle Spirits Forest in the day, was much easier to traverse than at night, and the checkpoints indicated on the map could mostly be found. The small team made good progress, finding it unexpectedly easy. The occasional low grade Spirit Beast appeared but Qiao Chu and the gang disposed of them quickly, without any difficulty.

The longer Fan Jin was in the team, the more he was overcome with awe. He had initially thought that with the unbelievably gifted Jun Xie in the team, the team had become rather amazing. But they had not gone much further when he witnessed the skills of Qiao Chu and his gang. He was certain that among these youths, not a single one among them had skills inferior to his.

The Zephyr Academy's Spirit Tournament's esteemed fourth in rank, was finding himself continuously shocked into speechlessness by these disciples from the branch division. He really did not know whether to laugh or cry.

They slaughtered all the Spirit Beasts that stood in their way, and they progressed very quickly. Before noon, they arrived at the side of a lake and they decided to rest awhile.

"Summon the Yin Yang Bear and the Double Headed Bone Snake." They had just stopped and Jun Wu Xie immediately turned to Hua Yao and Qiao Chu.

Qiao Chu and the others had noticed earlier when Jun Xie had been intimidating Li Zi Mu, that Jun Xie was actually able to heal the Yin Yang Bear's injuries. When they heard Jun Wu Xie's words, they immediately jumped at the chance and summoned their ring spirits without hesitation.

Because the Yin Yang Bear had already undergone Jun Wu Xie's healing earlier, it was much more alert than the Double Headed Bone Snake. It was not known whether it was Jun Xie's earlier healing that had greatly impressed the Yin Yang Bear, but immediately after it was summoned, it walked tottering to come before Jun Wu Xie, its huge lumbering body like a small hill as it sat down with a loud thump, and raised its furry paw and stretched it out before Jun Wu Xie.

The next moment, Qiao Chu's face was suddenly flushed a deep shade of red.

“Darn it! Can that fat blob be more shameless than that!? It is actually trying to curry favour with someone else besides me! How humiliating !” All the other might know know it, but Qiao Chu was acutely aware of what kind of emotions were going through the Yin Yang Bear at that moment. The Yin Yang Bear was asking to be healed and that stretched out paw was meant as an exchange!

[I'll let you stroke and touch, you heal up my injuries.]

Chapter 464: “Being Cute Has Its Perks (2)”

Qiao Chu was feeling too ashamed to look at Jun Xie. His ring spirit had been guilty of such a shameless and humiliating atrocity. Fortunately, the Yin Yang Bear was incapable of speech, if the Yin Yang Bear had said all that was in its heart then, Qiao Chu would have jumped into the lake to drown himself in humiliation.

Jun Wu Xie raised her eyes and looked at the furry figure before her, its head lowered and its paw extended. Her eyes narrowed slightly and she lifted her hand to slap the Yin Yang Bear’s paw aside.

“Oww~” The towering Yin Yang Bear whined pitifully as it held the paw that had been slapped away to its chest, its face looking heartrendingly hurt as it looked at Jun Xie pleadingly.

“The Double Headed Bone Snake’s injuries are more serious. He goes first.” Jun Wu Xie’s face was stern as she admonished the Yin Yang Bear.

The Yin Yang Bear turned to look at the unmoving and dispirited Double Headed Bone Snake lying on the ground, and turned back to look at Jun Xie again, before it struggled reluctantly to shift its big furry behind. It shifted its lumbering body and made some space before it lifted both its chubby paws to move the Double Headed Bone Snake to come right before Jun Xie. Its enormous behind jiggled once more as it shifted its position and came to rest right behind Jun Wu Xie, its two stubby hind legs stretched out beside Jun Wu Xie’s tiny form.

Luckily, the huge towering bear had a great girth and its wide width allowed Jun Wu Xie ample room to move and carry out her Spirit Healing.

Qiao Chu could not bear to look on at his ring spirit’s idiocy any longer. He clutched at his chest and turned around to rest against Fei Yan’s shoulder, looking all humiliated and embarrassed.

“Can I request for a change of ring spirits? This is too outrageous..... My Rolly wouldn't possibly do something this shameless!”

Qiao Chu only wanted to remember his Rolly's magnificence and overwhelming strength as the Yin Yang Bear, that had dominated and earned for itself a well respected place. He was not willing to accept the fact that the black and white fluffy panda behind him that was trying so hard to act cute was the same dominating ring spirit of his.

Ring spirits were spiritual bodies and when they got injured, they did not feel the same pain like humans, when the agony stemmed from their flesh and bones. When ring spirits got gravely injured, they become very weak and they would be tormented by agony of another kind. The pain that torments the spirit cannot be described by words and ever since Rolly realised that when Jun Xie put his hand on him, he would feel much better, and his spirit gets healed, that was the only thing that he knew and cared about, the small sized boy that was able to drive away his agony.

Jun Wu Xie did not give the panda who was still trying its best to stick to her any more attention, but raised her hand and infused her palm with spiritual energy and transferred it into the Double Headed Bone Snake's body, patching up its spirit's deficiencies a little by little.

It was easy when people talked about patching up a deficient spirit, but the execution was inconceivably complicated. Spirits were in actuality formless and when they got injured, they become weak. To target their deficiencies and patch them up completely, required a certain level of endurance and strength of mind. The spirit energy that was to be infused into the ring spirit had to be controlled and precise. If the energy flow was too weak, it would not heal any of the deficiencies, and if it was too strong, the spirit energy flow might burn the ring spirit's spirit essence.

Under the extended period of healing, Jun Wu Xie needed to

maintain a constant flow of spirit energy and the speed called for unbroken consistency.

The meticulous precision required was right up her alley and she discovered after having achieved her breakthrough, her spirit power had grown more abundant. Although it was still insufficient to fully heal the Double Headed Bone Snake and the Yin Yang Bear in one go, it nevertheless allowed her to shorten the whole healing process. The Double Headed Bone Snake's and the Yin Yang Bear's injuries were not as severe as what the Snow Lotus sustained, and barring any unexpected incidents, Jun Wu Xie was confident that she would be able to heal both the ring spirits back to their peak condition.

Jun Wu Xie carried out the healing for the Double Headed Bone Snake in silence while the others just around quietly, not daring to distract Jun Xie even the slightest. Even Qiao Chu who had been deeply embarrassed by his ring spirit's shameful actions swallowed all his grumbles, and was reduced to squatting in a corner subdued, nibbling on dry rations, watching Jun Xie carry out her Spirit Healing.

Chapter 465: “Being Cute Has Its Perks (3)”

After Jun Wu Xie completed the first round of healing for the Double Headed Bone Snake, the Double Headed Bone Snake showed significant improvement in its condition, and both its heads that were drooping wearily before lifted up strongly.

Having finished the treatment, Jun Wu Xie fell backwards suddenly.

When Qiao Chu and the others saw Jun Xie falling backwards, they were shocked and they scrambled in a hurry to rush to him, afraid that the depletion of energy required for the consecutive healing of two high grade ring spirits might have been too much for their petite little companion.

However, before they managed to get to Jun Xie.....

Jun Wu Xie suddenly squealed and was buried into the deep thick fur on Rolly’s considerable sized tummy. Her small frame was almost completely engulfed into Rolly’s soft belly and Jun Wu Xie let out a big sigh within the comfy softness.

All the others who had already made it midway towards Jun Xie suddenly stopped in their tracks and a twitching could be seen on their temples as they strode back to their original spots.

They realised that Jun Xie’s spirit power had not been completely exhausted, but he had just wanted to enjoy the soft and furry comfort of the huge belly behind him.....

That sudden realisation made the companions who had just witnessed Jun Xie’s unhesitant and decisive killer instinct unable to come to terms with the irrational and drastic contrast.

“Huh?” Rolly lowered its head and looked at Jun Xie who was lying spreadeagled on his tummy, and its head tilted to one side, not understanding.

“Healing later.” Jun Wu Xie patted Rolly on its tummy,

immersing herself into the fluffy fur. However, Jun Wu Xie suddenly got up and stared at Rolly's tummy with a deep frown.

"It's not fluffy." Jun Wu Xie grumbled, the frown still on her face.

"Wooo....." Feeling that it had been spurned, Rolly rubbed sadly at its rotund belly, attempting to fluff up its own fur.

Jun Wu Xie narrowed her eyes and infused her hand with spirit power once again before she lifted it. She placed her hand over Rolly's tummy and the the fur that had lost its lustre suddenly become fluffy and soft. Jun Wu Xie looked critically as the change happened under her eyes and she retracted her hand after she was satisfied with what she saw. She then proceeded to jump once again into the soft fur that had been restored to his fluffy state.

The little black cat had grown used to its mistress weakness for anything soft, furry and cute and it jumped up calmly onto Rolly's shoulder and pawed at the fur a little to fluff it up and lay down after making the spot comfortable.

Fei Yan was back at his spot by the lake and was smiling widely at the sight before him. He turned to Qiao Chu and said, suddenly looking serious: "I just found out that your Rolly has another ability."

"What?" Qiao Chu asked, deeply curious.

"Making Little Xie happy." Fei Yan said with a loud guffaw.

That kid Jun Xie always had a stoic face on him all day long and was cold and expressionless. It was on rare occasions like this that they saw a crack on the immovable glacier and witnessed these more human emotions displayed by him. The credit went fully to Rolly's clever "exploitation" by "sacrificing its body" that their eyes were treated to such an eyeopener.

Qiao Chu's face scrunched up and it flushed red all of a sudden. He glared at Fei Yan and got up to stomp off, coming to sit down

beside Fan Jin instead.

“All these rascals, with not a single one of them normal. I think you are the most normal one among us.” Qiao Chu was feeling harassed by his other companions and came to seek consolation from the sensible Fan Jin.

Fan Jin’s mouth twitched and in his heart, he thought: [You are rather abnormal yourself if you do realise!]

Although Rolly and the Double Headed Bone Snake still carried injuries on them, but based on their massive size and the power he felt from the two ring spirits, Fan Jin was certain that the grades that two ring spirits belonged to were extraordinarily high! Higher than any ring spirit that Fan Jin had ever seen before.

A group of disciples from the branch division, whose skills and power completely overshadowed the Spirit Tournament’s fourth rank, and whose ring spirits made his own ring spirit to show respect and fear.

These youths that Jun Xie had gathered together to join their team, where had all these monstrously powerful youths sprouted out from, a rock?”

They were all just like Jun Xie! Scarily and unbelievably strong!

Fan Jin self confidence had all been shattered into dust before Qiao Chu and his gang. He suddenly felt incredibly sad for all those other disciples who had mocked and ridiculed this team before they had entered the forest. He was not leading a team of parasites who depended on his power for protection, but he had actually teamed up with a whole bunch of incredibly and inconceivably powerful people who smashed all norms beyond all his expectations!

Chapter 466: “Being Cute Has Its Perks (4)”

For the next few days, Jun Wu Xie and her team roamed about within the Beast Spirits Forest and the amount of Spirit Stones stored within the cosmos sack increased more and more. Although they were mainly just small spirit stones acquired from lower grade Spirit Beasts, the large quantity still gave the team a considerable yield.

Within these few days, they brushed shoulders with several other small teams, but most of them were from the branch division and the disciples in those teams were usually nervous when they encountered Jun Wu Xie’s team.

The criteria for assessment for the Spirit Hunt was based mainly on the quantity of spirit stones each and every disciple held in their hands at the end of the event. Hence, besides hunting down Spirit Beasts, some of the stronger teams had even resorted to robbing the spirit stones from weaker opposing teams, and the teams from the branch division were usually made to be prime targets. The skills and power of the teams from the branch division were usually far inferior to teams from the main division and they were only able to successfully hunt low grade Spirit Beasts with large numbers which usually resulted in insufficient quantity in spirit stones to be split among the many disciples involved. On top of that, when they cross paths with teams from the main division, their meager stock of spirit stones were usually forcibly taken from them as well.

And the result was that teams from the branch division detected that teams from the main division were near, they were usually seen to run away faster than when they encountered Spirit Beasts.

Most teams from the main division avoided Fan Jin when they encounter his team. Although they were usually highly tempted to rob the team tagged as the “weakest team”, they were nevertheless wary of Fan Jin presence, and did not dare act rashly against him

and his team.

“I heard everybody saying that the Battle Spirits Forest was full of dangers everywhere, why am I feeling so bored then?” Qiao Chu had his hands clasped behind his head, and his habitual blade of grass dangling from his mouth, as he strode nonchalantly, bringing up the rear of his team.

The consecutive days of idleness besides overpowering Spirit Beasts with a low attack power of five made him restless with the inactivity.

Fan Jin turned around to look at Qiao Chu. After the past few days of interaction with the team, his heart had recovered somewhat from initial utter devastation at his lack of abilities to numb acceptance.

After he witnessed Qiao Chu's and his gang's skills and power, he suddenly realised that even if he gathered the top ten ranked disciples of the Zephyr Academy together to form a team, their combined power would still pale in comparison to his current teammates.

Scaring the living daylights of other disciples, the ferocious and merciless Spirit Beasts suddenly became tame sheep awaiting their slaughter before his monstrous teammates.

Not to mention.....

Fan Jin's eyes strayed to steal a glance at the towering and massive Yin Yang Bear, Rolly.

Ever since after Jun Xie had healed Rolly, Qiao Chu had not had the chance to send Rolly back to the Spirit World. Whenever Qiao Chu showed any such intention, Rolly would at the first instance speed to stand before Jun Xie and present his soft and fluffy tummy, by suddenly lying on the ground right before Jun Xie to allow Jun Xie to pat him.

And whenever that happened.....

A glare from Jun Xie always quickly convinced Qiao Chu otherwise, as he could only cry tearlessly as his ring spirit continued to embarrass him endlessly.

It had gotten worse now. Rolly had decided that it might as well serve to be Jun Xie's alternative mode of transport and carried Jun Xie upon its shoulders. With its two stubby legs, it huffed and puffed as it kept pace with the others in the team.

With such a massive ring spirit like Rolly so prominently present with the team, all the lower grade Spirit Beasts in this region of the Battle Spirits Forest were driven into flurried escape when they sensed Rolly's dominating presence before they even saw their team, resulting in that team not even being able to see a single bunny.

For the whole of today, they were not even able to spot a single low grade Spirit Beast and Qiao Chu was almost on the verge of chewing his own ring spirit's claws in restlessness.

Sitting high atop Rolly's shoulders, Jun Wu Xie was enjoying the soft feel and touch of Rolly's fluffy fur when suddenly, her eyes narrowed slightly. She had smelled a slight tinge of blood carried here by the light breeze that blew past them!

Chapter 467: “Consecutive Slaps – Second Form (1)”

High atop Rolly’s shoulders, Jun Wu Xie was still enjoying the soft fluffy touch of the ring spirit’s thick fur when she narrowed her eyes suddenly. The light wind that blew past her carried with it the faint but distinct scent of blood that she absolutely abhorred!

“Stop!” Jun Wu Xie said suddenly.

The team immediately stopped in their tracks.

“What is it?” Fan Jin frowned, worried.

“I smell blood.” Jun Wu Xie replied, her brow furrowing.

“Spirit Beasts?” Qiao Chu turned around and sniffed with his nose, but he did not smell anything unusual and gave up.

“Human blood.” Jun Wu Xie’s eyes narrowed. The scent was extremely faint and if they had not been moving in a direction against the wind, the scent would not have reached them. Due to the fact that the scent was carried here by the wind and that it was very faint, Jun Wu Xie deduced that they were still a distance away from the source. She looked up and stared into the wind. They had come to the edge of the area marked out on the map and if they moved inwards any further, they would be stepping into territories beyond the area marked safe by the Zephyr Academy.

Qiao Chu and the others turned their eyes to peer into the direction that Jun Xie was looking at. That part of the forest had denser trees and vegetation than any areas they had passed before. Every tree looked to be more than ten metres in height and their thick overhanging canopies covered the area they were looking at completely, making it too dark to see clearly what was past those trees.

“Is it coming from in there?” Qiao Chu asked.

Jun Wu Xie nodded.

“Shall we go see?” Qiao Chu was eager to have found something to do. The area marked out by the Zephyr Academy mainly only had low grade Spirit Beasts and posed no challenge to them. And with the towering figure of Rolly in their midst, they had not even managed to come across those low grade Spirit Beasts. If things continued on like this, Qiao Chu felt like he was bound to go mad with boredom.

Jun Wu Xie turned her gaze to Fan Jin. She did not have any other objective coming into the Battle Spirits Forest but to slaughter any targets that came to them on their own to seek their own deaths.

Fan Jin was silent a moment before he said: “That area encroaches into the center regions of the Battle Spirits Forest and within it, not only high grade Spirit Beasts roam, but you might even encounter Guardian Grade Spirit Beasts. Are you sure you want to go in there?”

“Guardian Grade Spirit Beasts?” Qiao Chu asked with a raised eyebrow.

“It is rumoured that Guardian Grade Spirit Beasts are unbelievably strong and even purple spirit users have to run away from them. Till now, no one has ever been known to be able to successfully hunt down a Guardian Grade Spirit Beast.” When Fan Jin mentioned Guardian Grade Spirit Beasts, he could not help it but to feel awe and fear rise within his heart.

A Guardian Grade Spirit Beast, that was a grade that no one had dared to ever challenge.

Qiao Chu had been anxiously eager to go check it out, but after hearing Fan Jin’s words of warning, he was looking visibly much more subdued.

The few of them might be able to use some extraordinary method

to forced the spiritual powers within their bodies to reach the purple spirit level, but it was only for short periods of time and it greatly depletes their spiritual power. Unless it was to saves the lives of their companions or themselves, they would much rather choose not to use it.

“Cough, I think we better look around someplace else.” Qiao Chu said practically. Although he did not know if Guardian Grade Spirit Beasts were as terrifying as Fan Jin’s words had made them out to be, but he did not want to use up too much of his spiritual power in a place like this.

However, Jun Wu Xie was still staring at the wide forest of tall trees and just as she turned herself away, a ragged figure covered in blood ran out from those trees, and looking at the blood stained clothes he was wearing, they could just make it out to be the uniform of the Zephyr Academy!

That figure was running with all his might, his face a mask of terror, and he was screaming at the top of his lungs. He stumbled and fell a few times, running and crawling in escape, in a direction towards Fan Jin and his team.

It might be due to the shock, but when the disciple saw Fan Jin, who was similarly dressed in the uniform of the Zephyr Academy, he began crying and shouting for help as he scrambled his way over to him.

“Help! Help!” As if clutching at his last straw of hope, the youth fell onto the ground before Fan Jin and pleaded loudly clutching at the corner of Fan Jin’s clothes.

Chapter 468: “Consecutive Slaps – Second Form (2)”

The disciple's clothes were all badly tattered and torn and a large deep gash that had cut him to the bone looking extremely garish. The countless cuts and gashes all over his body made one want to turn away in horror and his face was deathly pale. Looking at the expression on his face, the disciple must have been scared out of his wits.

The direction that the disciple had run out from showed that that area was outside of the boundaries depicted on the map given to them by the Zephyr Academy and by right, there should not have been any of the Zephyr Academy's disciples in there.

“What happened?” Fan Jin helped the disciple up and found that the disciple was trembling in fright and the disciple stuttered: “Spirit Beast..... It's a Spirit Beast..... There's a Spirit Beast in there! Huge! Humongous!” The disciple was raving and it was a while before he realised that it was Fan Jin who was standing before him. He suddenly regained his senses and pleaded with all his might: “Senior Fan! Save me! Please save me!”

“Is anyone else in there?” Fan Jin asked with a worried frown. The center regions of the Beast Spirits Forest was an area that nobody had ever dared set foot into. So what were all these disciples doing in there?

“Yes..... there are..... many of us..... Senior Fan, please hurry and save them.....” The disciple cried as tears ran down his face.

Jun Wu Xie was silent as she looked at the disciple groveling at Fan Jin's feet, her eyes not showing a ripple of emotion.

Fan Jin turned his head at that moment to look at Jun Xie as he had subconsciously started to seek Jun Xie's opinion. He did not know what kind of Spirit Beast those disciples had encountered

and it was highly possible that in the center region, it could very well be a champion grade Spirit Beast and if that was the case, they might still not be able to contain it sufficiently to escape.

Rescue or abandon?

“Senior Fan wants to rescue them?” Jun Wu Xie asked suddenly.

Fan Jin hesitated a moment before he nodded slightly. “We are afterall from the same academy.” The disciple who fled had his bloodied hands still tightly clasped on Fan Jin, and the warmth from the blood that had seeped in through his clothes was clearly felt on his skin.

Jun Wu Xie did not immediately reply but only stared at the disciple from her higher position and after a brief moment, she slowly said: “When you met with such danger, why didn’t you release the signal flare?”

Before entering the Battle Spirits Forest, all the disciples were given two distress signal flares to carry with them just for emergencies like this.

The disciple raised his head and when his eyes saw the massive Yin Yang Bear, he was suddenly speechless. His terror filled eyes flashed with shock a brief moment but quickly reverted back to terror once again. “The canopies of the trees in there are too thick and we were not able to release our signal flares in there.” After saying that, the disciple pulled out two used signal flares and showed them to the group.

In regions where the tree were immensely tall and grew extremely close to each other, they would prevent signal flares from being fired effectively. The distress signal flares the Zephyr Academy disciples were supplied with were meant to be used only within the boundaries marked out on the map. Although the tree population was rather dense as well, the heights their treetops reached were significantly lower and would not completely block out the flares from the distress signals. But if the disciples went in

further, treading into the center regions of the Battle Spirits Forest, it would not be impossible if such circumstances were to happen.

Jun Wu Xie continued to stare at the injured disciple, her cold chilly eyes stopping briefly on the badly bloodied face. She finally turned her eyes away and said: “Then, let’s go.”

Jun Wu Xie’s words made Fan Jin heave a sigh of relief but Qiao Chu and his gang exchanged glances with each other, as if sharing unspoken thoughts telepathically, without saying a word.

“This is my distress signal flare. We will go rescue them now. Fire it in a while and the Teachers in charge will rush over to come get you shortly.” Fan Jin handed to the disciple medicine and the distress signal flare he had on him and gave his instructions carefully.

The disciple immediately nodded in gratitude.

Chapter 469: “Consecutive Slaps – Second Form (3)”

Executing a rescue mission was like saving a fire and Fan Jin did not dare delay a moment longer. He moved immediately with Jun Xie and his team towards the region fraught with unknown dangers.

After Fei Yan went past the injured disciple, he stopped for just a brief moment, and turned his eyes back to look at the exhausted youth panting heavily as he laid heavily against a tree. The youth noticed Fei Yan staring at him and his expression froze.

“What a coincidence, you are from the branch division as well.” Fei Yan exclaimed with a smile and pointed at the jade emblem before the disciple’s chest, and he saw the youth suddenly relax, and smiled weakly while he nodded.

Fei Yan did not say anything more and picked up his pace to catch up with Hua Yao and the others.

“What is Little Xie planning to play at this time?” Fei Yan quietly leapt to appear beside Rong Ruo and Rong Ruo turned to look at him, putting a finger to her lips. Fei Yan’s lips suddenly curved into a smile.

After seeing Jun Xie and his team enter the forest, the disciple who had been leaning against the tree pushed himself to stand up and the terror stricken face suddenly reverted to normal and he threw the two distress signal flares Fan Jin gave him into the thick grass that grew thickly in the area.

Upon entering that part of the forest, the scent of blood that reached their noses grew thick and pungent, and Fan Jin’s expression became anxious.

The surroundings looked completely different from all the places they had travelled through in the days past within the Battle Spirit

Forest. The trees grew much closer to each other and it was difficult for them to move around inside, even more so for a massive ring spirit like Rolly. Left with no other choice, Jun Wu Xie slipped off Rolly's shoulder and had Qiao Chu send Rolly back to the Spirit World.

Following the thickening scent of blood, Jun Wu Xie and her teammates went deeper into the forest. The roars of Spirit Beasts sounded from all directions and the thick canopies overhead blocked out the sun's rays. Even though it was day, under the thick leaves of the innumerable trees, it was nevertheless very dim. Twisted vines entrenched themselves in abundance all over the path that laid before them and Fan Jin took out his trusty short sword he carried with him, cutting and slashing his way through them, blazing a new trail ahead for his teammates.

Jun Wu Xie and the others followed patiently behind him.

After bashing through layers and layers of prickly and thorny bramble, the team finally came before a little open clearing. The thickets and bushes in the area were in a state of disarray and broken branches littered the ground. Trees lay broken upon the ground, the area a tiny little clearing of light, torn open within the dense and immense forest. On the leaves and grass that covered the ground in that little clearing, trails of blood could be seen. As their eyes followed the trails of blood to their source, they saw over twenty disciples dressed in uniforms of the Zephyr Academy, lying scattered upon the ground moaning in pain. Wounds big and small covered their bodies and they were all covered in blood.

Fan Jin's heart jumped and he rushed out, running into the clearing over to them.

Qiao Chu and the others were just about to follow when Jun Wu Xie suddenly raised a hand, stopping them in their tracks.

"Wait and see." Jun Wu Xie's cold eyes surveyed the disciples lying across the clearing and took a deep breath, almost tasting the

heavy scent of blood in the air, and her eyes darkened, suddenly replaced by a chill.

Qiao Chu and the others held their steps and stood beside Jun Wu Xie, looking on as Fan Jin sped towards the injured disciples alone.

Fan Jin came beside a blood covered youth and lifted him up slightly, propping him up. The disciple's face was covered in blood and Fan Jin was not able to see his face clearly.

“What kind of Spirit Beast did you meet? What happened here?” Fan Jin looked worriedly at the youth. All twenty odd of them were injured, what kind of Spirit Beast could inflict such damage?

“I..... I don't know..... It..... it was moving too fast, we could not react in time, and were all taken down the next moment. Senior Fan, you must save us.” The youth said, his hand holding Fan Jin's arm in a vice like grip.

Chapter 470: “Consecutive Slaps – Second Form (4)”

Fan Jin nodded and hurriedly scanned his eyes over the youth's injuries. Perhaps it was the pain from the injuries that had made the youth grip his arm so tightly, and it was hurting him.

However, just as Fan Jin lowered his eyes to check on the youth's injuries, murder flashed suddenly in the youth's eyes. The other disciples who had been lying on the ground moaning in pain suddenly all jumped up and pulled out their hidden daggers, rushing at Fan Jin all at once!

Fan Jin suddenly sensed danger and wanted to jump out of harm's way but he found his limbs tightly held down by the youth he had been holding. He looked up at the youth and saw that those eyes no longer showed fear and despair, but were filled with venomous murder.

“Senior Fan, the very same day next year will be the anniversary of your death, so do rest in peace!” The youth's body leaned back slightly as he gave out a loud chilling laugh, which revealed his blood covered hands. On those hands, were a pair of open fingers gloves, and they were glowing slightly with spirit energy.

Fan Jin gasped in surprise. The youth was obviously a user of a weapon spirit and those gloves must be his ring spirit. Caught completely unawares, he found himself held down forcibly and Fan Jin suddenly realised that he wasn't able to break free!

Meanwhile, the attackers were closing in on him from all directions quick and coordinated. The youth who had been Fan Jin locked down in a death grip suddenly felt his hands grasping at air. When he realised it, he suddenly saw that Fan Jin had disappeared from his sight and all the fingers on his hands had been cut off cleanly! Bright red blood suddenly spurted out from those wounds on his fingerless hands!

“AARGH!” A deafening loud howl erupted from the youth’s throat as he held out his hands, and fell heavily onto the ground.

A silver bolt of lightning flashed to come stand beside Jun Wu Xie and as the blur of movement stopped, the face of a grinning Fei Yan appeared, and his hands were still holding on to a completely stunned Fan Jin.

Fan Jin’s face showed nothing but utter shock and his mind still had not recovered from all that had happened in a short blink of an eye.

The youth who had all his fingers cut off was still howling in pain and the rest who had rushed in to attack Fan Jin were now standing in the clearing in confusion. Those twenty odd disciples who had been writhing on the ground and moaning in pain just moments earlier were now all standing upright, all their faces wary, as they stared at Fan Jin standing behind Jun Xie.

“What..... what is going on here?” Fan Jin asked as he stared at the youths in perfect health. However dense he might be, he could still see that all the disciples were not injured. All the blood on them had been deliberately smeared onto their bodies.

“It’s clear to see, this had been a trap.” Qiao Chu swayed as he moved to come beside stand Fan Jin, patting him comfortingly on the shoulder. “I had thought that you had already realised it and was just playing along. It seems you were really not aware?”

“What..... should I be aware of?” Fan Jin’s mind was in a hopeless state of confusion and he was still not able to fully comprehend the whole situation.

“These people were never in need of rescue. The reason that they are all gathered here, was to take your life.” Qiao Chu explained it to him readily.

“What !?” Fan Jin’s face paled immediately and he realised at that moment that the twenty odd youths were moving in towards

them and all their ring spirits had been summoned, and their fangs were bared right at him.

“Fan Jin, don’t dream of walking out of the Battle Spirits Forest alive today. If you do not want to drag your companions down with you, just give up and surrender yourself to us.” The leader of the youths said, his eyes staring with undisguised malevolence at Fan Jin.

Chapter 471: “Consecutive Slaps – Second Form (5)”

“Who are you people?” Things had already come to such a stage and if Fan Jin still did not realise the intentions of the group of people before them, he would have lived his almost two decades in vain.

But he would never have expected that anyone would want to take his life!

“People who are here to kill you.” The leader of the youths said with a cold laugh and his eyes swept over Jun Xie and the others around Fan Jin.

“If you guys from the branch division are not looking to die today, leave immediately. If any of you dare to mention a word of what happened here today, I will come after you!”

Qiao Chu and his companions looked at each other all around, with vicious smiles across all their faces. Qiao Chu craned his neck to ask Jun Xie: “And these?”

Jun Wu Xie’s eyes narrowed. “Kill.”

“Roger!”

Qiao Chu took the lead while Hua Yao, Fei Yan and Rong Ruo followed just a step behind him.

Qiao Chu cracked his knuckles loudly and stretched his neck to loosen his muscles. He stared at the group of youths and said: “Sorry. Not leaving, and neither do we want to die today. But you can choose to hand your lives over and we’ll consider leaving your bodies intact.”

The leader of the youth had not expected the trash from the branch division to be so arrogant and spew such scornful words. He was taken aback a short moment before he laughed out loud.

“You’re just a bunch of trash! Do not overestimate yourself!”

That silver flash of lightning had been too fast and none of them had even noticed where it had come from. They had misunderstood Fan Jin’s escape and the other youth’s cut off fingers to be the work of Fan Jin’s as Fan Jin himself had never been perceived to be a weak opponent, but this careless assumption and misunderstanding, had irrecoverably made the youths put their first foot into their graves.

“Little Xie, do we leave one alive?” Qiao Chu asked, tugging at his ears. He was not interested in the least to waste any more of his breath on a bunch of youths who were about to lose their lives.

“One.” Jun Wu Xie replied.

“No problem !” Qiao Chu beamed widely at Jun Xie and before any of those youths could react, a figure had already streaked towards them and Hua Yao and the other two followed closely behind. Their lightning speed was too fast for any of the youths to be able to see them clearly.

The youths who had all been overbearing and their eyes filled with contempt just a moment ago suddenly saw the four figures disappear from where they had been standing. Their contempt and overinflated egos were suddenly smashed to pieces and before they realised what was happening, Fei Yan was already beside the leader of the youths and Fei Yan’s heavy fist swung right into the leader’s spine!

A loud hair raising crack tore through the air at that moment!

The leader of the youth gave a ear splitting howl and as his spine snapped in two at the impact, his body crumpled heavily to the ground and large quantities of blood spewed out of his mouth.

“We’ll leave you alive.” Fei Yan smiled sweetly at the leader of the youths and immediately turned with a raised foot that landed heavily on another youth who had been rushing to rescue their

leader.

The clear crackling sound of bones breaking rang out once again and as if moving in a graceful dance performed with the spray and splattering of blood, the four figures moved and glided amongst the youths and in the next moment, only half of the initial twenty odd disciples were still standing!

Not a single one among them would have thought that the four disciples from the branch division that they completely disregarded would possess such overwhelming skills and power. Under the onslaught by Qiao Chu and his gang, all the twenty odd disciples had not been able to resist them even the slightest!

The first youth whose spine had been broken by Fei Yan was lying upon the ground, shocked beyond words at the bloody carnage before his eyes. He saw his companions being killed one after another with such ease that he thought he was seeing Death's scythe cutting them down and claiming their lives at that moment !

These four disciples from the branch division, what kind of monsters were they !?

How could they possibly be so ridiculously powerful!?

They had all so confidently assumed that among the members within the "weakest team" with Jun Xie, only Fan Jin alone would be a worthy opponent. But the blood filled reality before their eyes had slapped them strongly across their faces, proving to them how wrong they had really been!

Chapter 472: “Consecutive Slaps – Second Form (6)”

They had all been turned into a big joke!

Fan Jin?

Compared to these four Grim Reapers, Fan Jin was totally not even worth mentioning!

The leader of the youths could do nothing but watch wide eyed as his companions were getting slaughtered. Their blood flew and splattered all over his body. It was blood that they smeared over themselves in disguise previously but this time, it was their own warm and fresh.....blood.....

Fear and terror slowly crept into his heart. At that moment, he suddenly realised that they had all fully underestimated the might and power of this team right from the beginning.

They had all thought the Fan Jin was the only team member that was able to fight and if they took out Fan Jin, they would be able to slaughter the rest of the team effortlessly.

But now, the ones being slaughtered, were they themselves.....

When the last one among the youths fell in a pool of his own blood, the fear that gripped at the heart of the leader of youths was almost at bursting point!

Suddenly, a shadow loomed over him, and a figure came into his vision. He hastily raised his head and his eyes saw a calm but cold and emotionless face.

“Useless bum.” Jun Wu Xie stared coldly at the youth crumpled on the ground.

The youth struggled to keep his head up and as Jun Xie’s cold chilly countenance fell into his eyes, the fear that still gripped at his heart spread throughout his entire body.

This was the very same coward that everybody claimed had holed himself up to hide from the rumours? This was the same Jun Xie that had lived clutching desperately onto Fan Jin's protection?

Even if you killed him then, he would never believe that the Jun Xie before his eyes was the same cowardly Jun Xie that everybody said he was!

After the bloodbath, Qiao Chu walked over and picked up the youth crumpled upon the ground.

The brutal and violent action made the youth moan loudly in pain, and his face was deathly pale.

Having been picked up, and turned to stare at Jun Xie directly, the fear in him suddenly intensified making it hard for him to breathe.

The boy was just a skinny and tiny sized youth but his cold and chilling pair of eyes made one feel as though they had been suddenly transported into the icy and snowy mountains and the biting chill had seeped painfully into their bones.

Jun Wu Xie turned to Fan Jin standing on one side and said: "You want to ask?" As the target of the set up trap was obviously Fan Jin.

Fan Jin clenched his jaw and looked at the deathly pale youth. "Why?"

The youth was drenched in sweat at the intense pain he was feeling. He had never thought that they would fail and after having witnessed all his companions slaughtered one by one, the arrogance and haughtiness had all dissipated into nothing and he only wanted to live, hence he was willing to divulge everything he knew.

"It was Yin Yan..... Yin Yan was the one who asked us to do this..... I beg you to spare me..... Whatever you want to know, I will tell you....." The earlier arrogance had disappeared and he was

reduced to a useless wreck of fear and terror, crying buckets while he pleaded pitifully.

“Yin Yan? He wants to kill me?” Fan Jin had not expected the answer to be like this as he never had much interaction with Yin Yan and he did not know what could have caused Yin Yan to harbour such strong enmity towards him.

It had been the same with the incident in the dining hall. Yin Yan had come at him aggressively for no rhyme or reason and Fan Jin had not known the reason behind it.

“Yes. It’s him. He made someone lure you to us and got us to pretend to be injured. And when you come, we were to surround and attack you.” The youth said as he secretly eyed Jun Xie and the others.

The plan was supposed to be perfect. The youth that ran out was supposed to put up a convincingly act of a hapless and deeply terrorized disciple, that would definitely draw out the righteous and fiercely protective nature in Fan Jin that would bring him flying to them. Everything had worked out just as planned but for one major snag. They had thoroughly underestimated the skills and might of the branch division disciples with Fan Jin.

“He had said that if we succeeded in killing you, he would handsomely reward us. And if our ring spirits were to be injured in future, he would unconditionally treat them for us.”

Chapter 473: “Consecutive Slaps – Second Form (7)”

Anxious to save himself, the youth spilled everything he knew.

Long before the day of the Spirit Hunt came, Yin Yan had approached them. The group was made up of seniors from the Beast Spirit and Weapon Spirit faculties. Their individual powers might not have been the cream of the crop, but their ring spirits had all possessed certain special qualities. Just like the first youth who had possessed the weapon spirit. If not for Fei Yan’s interference, they would have successfully sealed Fan Jin’s movements and the others would have completed the job the next moment.

Yin Yan had used his position as a disciple of the Spirit Healer faculty to promise those disciples many rewards and had hinted to them that once they successfully killed Fan Jin, their positions within the Zephyr Academy would become more stable.

“Everyone knew that Yin Yan had an extremely good relationship with Senior Ning and Senior Ning was the daughter of the Vice Headmaster. So Yin Yan’s words were as good as it being Senior Ning’s words. We..... we were blinded by greed! Senior Fan! Find the benevolence in your heart to spare me this one time. I will not dare to ever do it again.” The youth pleaded in tears. If they did not think Senior Ning would have their backs, they would never have agreed to such a request from Yin Yan.

Do not forget that Fan Jin was also the adopted son of the Headmaster!

“Ning Xin..... How can it be..... How can it possibly be her?” When Fan Jin heard the name Ning Xin being mentioned, his face had turned white and he had staggered back a step in shock, unable to accept what the youth had just said.

Jun Wu Xie glanced at Fan Jin and turned to the youth to ask: “Besides all of you here, are there any others?”

The youth shook his head and said in a hurry: “No more! There is no one else! Yin Yan told us he will think of a way to force you to take part in the Spirit Hunt with Senior Fan and when Senior Fan is dragged down by such useless bag..... It would make it easier for us to complete the task.” The youth glanced at Jun Xie and said fearfully.

“What?” Fan Jin’s eyes widened with incredulity as he stared at the youth.

If what the youth said was true, that it was Yin Yan’s intention to force Jun Xie to take part in the Spirit Hunt, that would mean that those people who had broken into the bamboo grove to curse and swear at Jun Xie were instigated by Yin Yan?

A revelation appeared in Fan Jin’s mind at that moment and he covered his face with his hands, cold sweat running down his back.

If all those wicked and vicious rumours surrounding Jun Xie had all been spread because he had mentored Jun Xie, and they had targeted Jun Xie just to hit out at him.....

That would mean that the person who had been helplessly implicated and dragged into an endless mess was not him! But it was he himself, who had unknowingly dragged Jun Xie into the mess instead!

The sudden realisation made Fan Jin’s head spin and he almost lost his footing.

Fan Jin was not able to talk for a long while and Jun Wu Xie asked the youth a few more questions. After being certain that the youth had no more useful information to give, Jun Wu Xie shot Qiao Chu a look.

Before the youth could even plead any further, Qiao Chu immediately lopped off the youth’s head.

Upon seeing the lifeless figure crumble back onto the ground, Fan Jin's eyes showed that he was still rather confused by all the things that were happening. He looked up suddenly and turned to Jun Xie. "Little Xie, you knew all this while that this was a trap?"

Jun Wu Xie nodded.

"From the moment the injured disciple had first appeared before us, you already knew?" Fan Jin stared at Jun Xie, his eyes looking intense.

"It was not possible for a seventeen or eighteen year old disciple to be in the branch division." Jun Wu Xie replied calmly. That injured disciple's act might have been a little convincing but it was his age that made it impossible for him to be from the branch division. And the fact that a disciple from the branch division was able to recognise Fan Jin for who he was at first glance did not seem logical, was the second giveaway.

Chapter 474: “Venomous Lady (1)”

If such a big number of people were really injured, the scent of blood in the air would have been much stronger and Jun Wu Xie only needed to sniff the air lightly, before she was certain that the scene before her eyes then was just an act.

Fan Jin bit on his lip. “When you agreed to come here, your real intention was to find out who was behind all this?”

Jun Wu Xie nodded again.

Fan Jin was suddenly silent. When he saw the reactions of Qiao Chu and the others, he believed they must have known everything all this while, but they had pretended not to know and walked right into the enemy’s trap, and the fact was that the target of that trap had been the only ignorant one among them all, himself.

All this time, he had proclaimed to be Jun Xie’s protector. Fan Jin finally realised that all the attacks that Jun Xie had suffered under, had almost all been because of himself. The guilt he felt in his heart at that moment, suffocated Fan Jin greatly.

“What do we do next?” Qiao Chu saw Fan Jin’s gloomy face and tried to change the topic, feeling a little sorry for Fan Jin.

Jun Wu Xie narrowed her eyes and suddenly called out: “Ye Sha.”

Just as Jun Wu Xie’s voice trailed off, a black shadowy figure suddenly appeared just behind her.

That man speed was so fast that even Hua Yao who was standing next to Jun Wu Xie was shocked. And when Hua Yao and Qiao Chu saw Ye Sha’s face, they immediately froze.

“You..... you..... Aren’t you.....” Qiao Chu would never forget that face his whole life. If it had not for this man’s self sacrifice by blowing his ownself up in the Cloudy Peaks that had held the two men back, he might not be alive now. But on that fateful day in the Cloudy Peaks, he was sure he had seen the man blow himself up

completely, so how is it possible that he is here now, still in one piece?

Ye Sha's eyes were fixed on Jun Wu Xie and there was no expression on that face. Ye Sha did not give Qiao Chu and Hua Yao even one single glance.

"This is not him." Jun Wu Xie said suddenly.

Qiao Chu's mouth opened and closed as he stared at Ye Sha in perplexity, but no sound came out of his mouth.

"Find me Ning Xin's location." Jun Wu Xie turned to Ye Sha and ordered.

"Yes!" The figure of Ye Sha shimmered and he disappeared completely from his spot.

Fan Jin, who had already been devastated with his earlier epiphany, suddenly found that he could not make his face show a more shocked expression anymore.

"Little Xie, you are going after those people called Ning Xin and Yin Yan next?" Fei Yan asked with a sweet smile as he looked at Jun Xie. From what the youth had said earlier, the whole gang had finally understood the whole situation and they had naturally identified the mastermind behind this assassination attempt.

"No rush." Jun Wu Xie said as she shook her head slightly.

After all that Ning Xin had done to Fan Jin, it had become like a fuse cord, that had led Jun Wu Xie to some clues to an unraveled mystery that had been on Jun Wu Xie's mind. She intended to gather more clues from it, for her to arrive at the answer that she sought.

"Who is this Ning Xin?" Jun Wu Xie asked, turning to the gloomy Fan Jin. When that youth had mentioned Ning Xin earlier, Fan Jin's face had displayed great consternation. It was as if that having Ning Xin being the mastermind behind all the treachery was more unacceptable to him than if it had been Yin Yan.

“She is Ning Rui’s daughter and Ning Rui is my father’s junior fellow disciple, currently taking up the position of Vice Headmaster in the Zephyr Academy. He is very close to my father and Ning Xin could have been said to have grown up together with me and Little Zhuo. Moreover..... Ning Xin and Little Zhuo are engaged in marriage but due to Little Zhuo’s health condition, he needed to recuperate and they seldom met. Ning Rui had initially spent a lot of time and spared no effort to seek treatment for Little Zhuo’s illness and even Ning Xin had often taken care of Little Zhuo them..... How could it possibly be her?” Fan Jin scratched furiously at his head in frustration. He really could not make himself picture Ning Xin to be a conspiratory and manipulative lady and link that to the soft spoken and gentle image he had always had of her in his mind.

Although Fan Zhuo and Ning Xin were not yet married, but Fan Jin had long seen her as his sister-in-law.

Chapter 475: “Venomous Lady (2)”

Fan Zhuo had always suffered from a weak constitution and been very sickly since young. Fan Jin was always very protective of his often ill little brother. Fan Qi and Ning Rui were fellow disciples and Ning Xin had grown up together with the Fan brothers. When they were very young, Fan Jin had treated Ning Xin like a little sister who had a very sweet temperament and who was very caring towards Fan Zhuo, leading to Fan Jin to think Ning Xin as his future sister in law.

But now, after hearing the youth, Fan Jin was utterly devastated, struck by a bolt out of the blue.

Although he had naturally known that Ning Xin was Yin Yan’s mentor all this time, Fan Jin still could not believe that his little sister would ever want to kill him.

“Could there be any misunderstanding behind all this?” Fan Jin asked through gritted teeth.

Jun Wu Xie looked at the deeply conflicted Fan Jin and did not give him any reply. Fan Jin’s character was just like that. Candid and generous, upholder of justice. Or he would not have stood forward to defend Jun Wu Xie when everyone else had turned against her.

A person like this, usually had an pure and untainted heart, a righteous person. If such a person lived his life in peaceful times, he would undoubtedly become the hero that everyone respected and revered. But the same person, would have an immense weakness. He would be too trusting of people and one would only need to show him a little kindness and one would win his absolute trust. To put it kindly, he was an innocent person, but bluntly, people would call him dumb.

If all this had been directed just at Jun Wu Xie, she would have just killed the enemy. But she was not the real target and she felt

Fan Jin should be the one to decide who lives and who dies.

But if Yin Yan and Ning Xin did not learn their lesson and further provoked her, she wouldn't mind settling some scores with them herself.

"Little Xie, can you agree to one thing?" Fan Jin asked Jun Xie suddenly.

"Speak." Jun Wu Xie said without emotion.

"Before the facts of the matter are all cleared up, spare Ning Xin just this once." Fan Jin said, his jaw still tightly clenched. After witnessing Qiao Chu and the rest of the gang's skills and prowess, he was well aware of the fact that it would not take much effort if Jun Xie wanted to kill Ning Xin. And if all that Jun Xie was put through in the Zephyr Academy was truly due to the urgings of Ning Xin from behind, Jun Xie had every reason to want to kill her.

But.....

When he thought back to the image of the little girl always tottering behind him and always looking up to call him "big brother Jin" and that Ning Xin might die, Fan Jin could not help it but feel an ache in his heart. He had to numb himself to the facts before him and wished fervently that it was all just a big misunderstanding.

"Once." Jun Wu Xie said, looking at Fan Jin, surprisingly acceding to Fan Jin's request.

The first time she had acceded to a similar request like this was to Mo Qian Yuan, and she had wanted Mo Qian Yuan to learn a lesson. As for Fan Jin, it was to repay him for his unwavering protection that he had shown to her all this while.

Jun Wu Xie might not know much about human relationships, but she knew one thing at least. Whoever treated her kindly, would receive more kindness back from her.

In reality, she had come to the Zephyr Academy with a specific objective. After Hua Yao and the others managed to locate the map, and retrieve it, they would not stay within the academy any longer. And the feud between the Fan Family and the Ning Family would not concern her. She had dirtied her hands now as the scheme had spilled onto her and also for the fact that both the Fan brothers had been extremely kind to her.

“Thank you.” Fan Jin said, heaving a sigh of relief. Only after having entered the Battle Spirits Forest had he realised that Jun Xie was never as weak as he had thought him to be. He might be cold and withdrawn, but he was one person not to be trifled with.

You wouldn’t know it if he remained silent, but any retaliation from him would make you never forget it for life!

Chapter 476: “Venomous Lady (3)”

As Fan Jin was discussing things through with Jun Wu Xie, the disciple who had lured Fan Jin and his team into the laid trap had speedily escaped into another area with his wounds.

In another part of the dense forest, a team of Zephyr Academy disciples had just successfully hunted a medium grade Spirit Beast. The large sized Spirit Beast's lifeless body lay on the ground and a tall youth stood over it with a foot on the Spirit Beast's head, digging for spirit stones within its broken skull.

A beautiful young girl stood at the edge of the group, staring at the gory sight with a frown on her face and covering her nose with her sleeve.

“Senior Ning, water for you?” Yin Yan stood at her side, offering the waterskin in his hand to Ning Xin, as adoration and worship filled his eyes.

Ning Xin glanced at Yin Yan and shook her head, and turned her eyes to look into another direction.

Suddenly, she saw another figure approach. She gestured to Yin Yan with a look in her eyes and Yin Yan immediately understood. Yin Yan turned and silently slipped away, to meet up with the approaching youth.

Ning Xin shifted her position inconspicuously to an angle that would allow her to discreetly see Yin Yan's interaction with that youth. She observed quietly, her face completely calm. But the flash of anxiety in her eyes betrayed what she was feeling inside.

Shortly after, Yin Yan ran back to her.

“How was it?” Ning Xin struggled to maintain a calm composure, trying to appear nonchalant as she asked.

“Fan Jin was successfully lured in, there should not be a problem. We have not seen any distress signal released, I think

they have all been taken care of.” Yin Yan spoke with his head lowered, trying very hard to hide the wide smile split across his face.

Their target had only been Fan Jin and they had not given any specific orders for the others in Fan Jin’s team. But they had nevertheless hinted that if the others were to resist, they were to be killed and have their bodies disguised to look as if they had been killed by high grade Spirit Beasts. And if any of Fan Jin’s teammates were still miraculously alive, they would have released their distress signal flares.

“Those guys wouldn’t have wanted their identities to be known and would naturally not have spared Jun Xie and the others.” Ning Xin said with a smile. She had only given instructions to kill only Fan Jin, but those people would not be dumb enough to leave any witnesses alive after that.

If they spared anyone from Fan Jin’s team, that person would be able to testify against them in the crime. And to protect themselves, it would be best if they eliminated all witnesses.

“You are right Senior Ning, one has to eliminate the root of the problem or it might fester and grow to become a problem once again. Only by shutting all the mouths of the witnesses permanently and completely can the matter remain an eternal secret, and only like this, would nobody ever find out how and why Fan Jin died. All those people who played a part in the assassination would never dare breathe a word of it to anybody.” Yin Yan said with a laugh. Although he was not able to see Fan Jin’s dead body, but hearing news of Fan Jin’s death pleased him to to end just the same.

Ning Xin waved her hand dismissively. “Things that have outlived their usefulness would naturally need to be disposed off properly. In this world, only the when they are dead, would people be able to keep a secret.”

Yin Yan felt a sudden chill and he raised his head to stare at Ning Xin.

“Senior Ning, you don’t mean.....”

Ning Xin’s eyes drifted towards a particular direction and her eyes did not look too far away. Her eyes stared at the area where the disciple was hidden, treating his own wounds, and she said with a seducing smile: “Every time the Spirit Hunt comes along, there are always some deaths among the Zephyr Academy’s disciples, and some had always gone missing without any reason. I’m afraid the death toll this time round might increase quite a bit, like maybe by another fold.” As Ning Xin said those words, her eyes were actually lit with joy when she turned them to look at Yin Yan. That was when Yin Yan felt the chill crawl up his spine and he shivered.

Chapter 477: “Venomous Lady (4)”

“Little Yan, are you feeling alright? Is the wind getting too chilly for you?” Ning Xin asked with a smile as she stared at the Yin Yan who had turned very pale, her smiling face as gentle and sweet as always.

Yin Yan regained his composure and hurriedly said: “Yes, it is a little cold.”

It must be his imagination. Senior Ning was such a perfect girl, how could she possibly have such vicious thoughts?

Ning Xin just smiled and did not say anything more.

On the other side, the disciples were still cleaning up the battlefield and another youth was running over to the tall disciple whose foot was still stepped upon the large Spirit Beast’s head shouting: “Senior Lu! Senior Lu!”

Lu Wei Jie turned his head and his face was graced with nice features, that held a tinge of arrogance. He jumped off the Spirit Beast with elegant flair and threw the blood stained spirit stones that he had dug out to another disciple standing on one side.

“What is it?” Lu Wei Jie asked as he wiped off the blood from his hands.

The youth replied hurriedly.

The youth had a weapon spirit and his ring spirit had the ability to transform into a pair of combat boots. Those boots enabled him to greatly increase his speed and jump ability and hence he had been assigned with the task of locating Spirit Beasts. He had been searching for their next target in an area deeper into the forest when he had chanced upon and witnessed a grand and magnificent battle. He had seen with his own eyes, a group of people kill a high grade Spirit Beast and the spectacular skills and power of those people had really been a feast for his eyes.

“Hunted a high grade Spirit Beast?” Ning Xin walked over slowly, after hearing the interesting bit of news.

Lu Wei Jie turned to look at Ning Xin, and when his gaze fell on her curvy figure, the arrogance within those eyes faded, replaced by one of adoration.

“Yes, those people really managed to kill the high grade Spirit Beast.” The youth who brought them the news nodded excitedly.

Lu Wei Jie frowned slightly. It was not easy to take down a high grade Spirit Beast. As the second in rank in the Zephyr Academy’s Spirit Tournament, his skills and power was deemed to be only inferior only to one person. And even with the team he led, that had been tagged as being the strongest strike team over all the others in the Zephyr Academy, they were still not confident that they can successfully take down a high grade Spirit Beast.

Spirit Beasts that belonged to the higher grades were not only much more powerful and stronger than those belonging to the middle grades, they also possessed a certain level of intelligence, and battled with logic, and would even escape.

To defeat a mid grade Spirit Beast, one only needed strength and power and a cohesive team spirit. But the requirements needed from the team to take down a high grade Spirit Beast were different and extremely harsh.

Till now, not a single team in the history of the Zephyr Academy’s Spirit Hunt had been able to successfully hunt down a high grade Spirit Beast.

“What kind of people were they?” Lu Wei Jie asked.

“I approached them to ask after they took down the Spirit Beast. They did not seem to know about the Zephyr Academy and its disciples and the people looked to be in their twenties. They said they were on an expedition and searching for a certain herb, but they were unfamiliar with the terrain in the deeper reaches of the

Battle Spirits Forest and were a little lost. They had even asked me if I knew the area well.” The youth shared everything the men had said readily.

The frown on Lu Wei Jie’s brow finally smoothed out after hearing the youth’s words.

As long as those people were not from the Zephyr Academy, then he was not that worried.

If there was a team within the Zephyr Academy that could single handedly take down a high grade Spirit Beast, that would be a big threat to him.

Lu Wei Jie was aiming to achieve first place in this Spirit Hunt.

“Oh?” Ning Xin said when the youth finished, an idea forming suddenly in her head.

Chapter 478: “An Opportunist (1)”

“Little Xin, did you just think of something?” Lu Wei Jie asked.

Ning Xin smiled sweetly and replied: “Isn’t our Senior Lu gunning for the top spot in this Spirit Hunt? If we successfully hunt down a few high grade Spirit Beasts and recover the spirit stones from them, you would not be first just for this year’s Spirit Hunt alone but go down in history to become the first person to ever successfully kill a high grade Spirit Beast in the annals of the Zephyr Academy’s Spirit Hunts.”

Lu Wei Jie’s eyes sparkled brightly at the thought. No sane man would reject such a tempting suggestion. But.....

“I am still not capable of taking on a high grade Spirit Beast yet.” Lu Wei Jie had to admit, that he was nothing before a high grade Spirit Beast.

Ning Xin smiled alluringly, “We don’t need our Senior Lu to dirty his hands. Didn’t some people just come to us to offer their assistance?”

Lu Wei Jie was confused.

“You mean.....”

Ning Xin turned to look at the youth who had brought them the news and gave him a sweet smile: “Go tell those men that we have a map covering the larger part of the Battle Spirits Forest and if they are willing to kill a few high grade Spirit Beasts for us, we can lead them to any part of the forest that they want.”

The young youth was suddenly taken aback as he stood there frozen on the spot. He stared at Ning Xin and then turned his eyes to look at Lu Wei Jie in consternation.

Lu Wei Jie was feeling rather torn, their team had dared to venture into the mid sections of the Battle Spirits Forest this time because Ning Xin was holding a copy of a rough and ill defined map

of the Battle Spirits Forest. The map however encompassed a much larger area than what the disciples were given by the Zephyr Academy and the major regions of the Battle Spirits Forest were marked out. It seemed that Ning Xin intended to make use of the map to enlist the help of those men in exchange for them to effortlessly acquire the high grade Spirit Stones.

“Hurry up and go. What are you waiting for?” Ning Xin coaxed gently.

The youth then turned and ran off in a hurry, to discuss further with those men on their business trip.

After the youth left, Lu Wei Jie decided that Ning Xin’s suggestion was just ingenious and heaped bundles of praise on her, making Ning Xin laugh out shyly.

While Yin Yan on the other hand, was left to tightly clench his fists silently, as he stared viciously at the back of Lu Wei Jie.

After a short while, the youth came running back once more and following behind him, were ten other men.

The ten men were all covered in cloaks and when you looked at them from afar, you would not be able to see their faces. But by just looking at their outlines, seven of the men looked to be extremely big and strong, and compared to the disciples of the Zephyr Academy, those men looked to be towering as a mountain before them.

“Senior Lu, Senior Ning, these are the friends who needed to use our map.” The youth hurried to introduce them.

The leader of the men removed his cloak. His big and tall build towered over them suffocatingly. The sun shone upon a stalwart and good looking face, unlike the delicate and pretty features of youth, that face was one filled with the indomitable air of masculinity, handsome tinged with the additional attractiveness of maturity. What really drew people to notice him most, was the

eyes on that face. Sharp as pointed knives, that made one very conscious when under that gaze.

The man was just standing there plainly without moving, but he gave out an overwhelmingly oppressive aura.

Lu Wei Jie, who had been standing with an air of arrogance about him, suddenly found his ego deflating and his shoulders lowered before the man's presence.

"I am just a humble bodyguard of this convoy on a business expedition. You can call me Escort Long." The handsome man said without an expression on his face as he looked at the youths before him.

Lu Wei Jie's eyes were transfixed on the man for quite a while when he suddenly snapped back to his senses. He hurriedly covered up his awe for Head Guard Long and struggled to put up a forced front of looking unaffected and said: "Lu Wei Jie from the Zephyr Academy's Weapon Spirit Branch, and this is Ning Xin."

Chapter 479: “An Opportunist (2)”

Escort Long acknowledged with a slight nod of his head and his calm but penetrating gaze made the youths feel slightly overwhelmed by those eyes.

He obviously had a good looking countenance but he somehow made people retreat unknowingly in reverence.

“In regards to your suggestion, I have heard about it. How many high grade Spirit Beasts do you need?” Escort Long asked plainly, straight to the point.

Lu Wei Jie’s heart leapt when he heard that and judging from tone, their terms had been accepted. He was just about to speak when Ning Xin shot him a look and he shut his mouth.

Ning Xin took a step forward and beaming as bright as a flower, she said: “That would depend on which part of the forest you intend to go to. To be honest, the map is extremely important to us and we hope you will pardon us that we cannot show the map to you. Wherever it is that you need to go, we’ll lead you there. As to the remuneration, it depends on where the place you need to go to is.”

Escort Long stared coldly at Ning Xin and hesitated a moment before he said: “We want to go to the Spirit Moon Lake.”

Those herbs they needed, only grows near the Spirit Moon Lake.

Ning Xin smiled.

“Five high grade Spirit Beasts.”

Escort Long’s brow furrowed. This little girl was rather voracious, he was only asking to be lead to a destination and she had unhesitatingly asked for five high grade Spirit Beasts. He knew that one lone spirit stone of any high grade Spirit Beast would easily fetch them an alarming price out in the market.

After considering it a moment more, Escort Long finally said: "Alright."

Ning Xin nodded with a smile and exchanged a quick glance with Lu Wei Jie. Lu Wei Jie reorganized his team, and placed Ning Xin to lead Escort Long and his men, as they made their way towards the Spirit Moon Lake.

Escort Long brought up the rear of the team in stoic silence. Several other men in his team had heard what Ning Xin had unabashedly asked for in repayment for leading the way and were feeling rather resentful.

"General Long, these pipsqueaks are too ruthless. Asking for five high grade Spirit Beasts just for leading the way. That's outright robbery!" One of the men complained, whispering softly.

Escort Long frowned. If it wasn't for the fact that the herb they needed was so extremely rare, and they only could be found in the vicinity around the Spirit Moon Lake, he wouldn't have agreed to such an unreasonable request.

"Master Mu has requested for it, and moreover, this herb would help the Rui Lin Army greatly in raising our power, it wouldn't hurt us much to let these kids get a good deal out of this just once." Escort Long..... To be precise, it was Long Qi, disguised as bodyguard of a trade convoy, said helplessly.

Not too long ago, Mu Chen came to the Lin Palace with a group of disciples from the Cloud Treading Peak and the incident had greatly surprised Jun Xian and Jun Qing. It had not been too long ago that they had just received news that the Qing Yun Clan had been obliterated and never would they have ever thought that Mu Chen would actually bring his disciples to come seek asylum from the Lin Palace. What shocked them further was when they heard from Mu Chen that it was all arranged by Jun Xie.

Throughout the period that Mu Chen joined the Lin Palace, he led his disciples to spare no effort in developing and producing

medicine that would improve the veins and arteries of the soldiers in the Rui Lin Army. Due to the elixirs that Jun Wu Xie had given to the Rui Lin Army previously that had completely transformed them, Mu Chen was faced with quite a daunting and difficult task to improve them further.

But Mu Chen fully intended to keep his promise. Since he had promised Jun Xie to do everything he can, he spent months researching and developing and finally managed to develop an elixir that would further improve on the soldiers' veins and arteries. But that elixir required a rare and unique kind of herb and although the Qing Yun Clan had it, he had brought the whole stock of it over to the Lin Palace. The Rui Lin Army was too numerous in number and he did not have enough to cultivate one hundred thousand elixirs for every single one of them.

Besides within the Qing Yun Clan, the herb only grew in the vicinity of the Spirit Moon Lake within the Battle Spirits Forest. For this, Mu Chen sent out three of his disciples to come to the Battle Spirits Forest in search of the herb and to ensure the safety of the disciples, Jun Xian sent Long Qi and six of the Rui Lin Army to go with them as bodyguards.

Chapter 480: “An Opportunist (3)”

Although the Battle Spirits Forest bordered the Qi Kingdom on one side, Long Qi and his group did not know much about the inside of the Battle Spirits Forest. They had gotten themselves lost when they entered the Battle Spirits Forest and had been attacked several times by Spirit Beasts. Long Qi and his team’s journey into the Battle Spirits Forest could be said to have trodden through blood.

The Lin Palace was not in need of spirit stones and within the Qi Kingdom, after Mo Qian Yuan ascended the throne to become the Emperor, he placed great trust on the Lin Palace and he allocated most of the kingdom’s supplies to the Rui Lin Army, giving them first priority. Long Qi had intended to hand the spirit stones he had gained on this journey to Jun Qing and have him decide what to do with them.

But now, in order to gain the location of the Spirit Moon Lake, he had no choice but to agree to Ning Xin’s unreasonable demand.

“General Long, we’ve really brought you much trouble.” Rong Heng said between gasps, as he struggled to keep up with the team. He had followed Mu Chen to the Lin Palace and they had started from learning to adapt to a new environment to having established a rather good relationship with the Rui Lin Army now.

The disciples who had come from the Cloud Treading Peak did not possess strong spiritual powers. Besides their proficiency at treating and developing people’s veins and arteries, they were not much different from the commoners. The current situation called for them to traverse across this dangerous and dense forest and it was getting to be a rather difficult task for them. If not for Lord Lin’s good foresight to have arranged Long Qi and his men to escort them, they might very well have been reduced to a pile of bones before they could even see the Spirit Moon Lake.

“You men are here seeking herbs to produce medicine for the Rui Lin Army, this is the least we must do.” Long Qi replied stoically, his tone flat which would usually make people feel unusually stern. But after having associated with them for some time, Rong Heng and the other disciples knew that that was just how these stalwart men who lived by the sword were.

“I hope we would be able to find enough Aqua Spirit Grass to produce sufficient elixirs.” Rong Heng said, barely managing a smile with the pace.

Long Qi nodded slightly and he signalled to the six Rui Lin Army soldiers. The other six men immediately split themselves into pairs and moved to come beside the Rong Heng and the other two disciples. They suddenly grabbed the panting disciples and continued the pace, lifting the disciples off their feet.

“Thank you so much.” Rong Heng thanked the soldiers again.

Ning Xin who had been leading the group observed the situation behind her silently. Lu Wei Jie picked up his pace and caught up with Ning Xin, asking her softly: “Little Xin, those guys do not look like herb merchants with their armed escorts.” He wasn’t completely certain about other things, but just picking on Escort Long’s overwhelming air, he knew that he was no ordinary guard. Lu Wei Jie had been able to achieve second place in the Zephyr Academy’s Spirit Tournament and he at least knew power when he saw it.

And just by standing before Long Qi, Lu Wei Jie had been awed by Long Qi’s oppressive presence and that oppression had not just been the disparity between their spiritual power and ring spirit but had come from the man’s aura that surrounded him.

That man’s presence inspired both respect and fear and his sharp eyes made one turn away, unable to look at him straight.

“Would an ordinary herb merchant come all the way into the Battle Spirits Forest? That would just be seeking their own doom.

If my guess is not wrong, if these people are not from one of the countries, they must belong to one of the mighty powers throughout the lands.” Ning Xin narrowed her eyes, “Look at those men who are taller and well built, their bodies are ramrod straight and their faces hardy. They must have undergone some form of rigorous training. They might be dressed in plain clothes but the weapons hanging from their hips are no ordinary swords. But no matter what they are seeking for, we know one thing for sure, they are strong and powerful enough.”

Ning Xin trusted that her own foresight, and she knew the men were definitely more than they appeared to be.

“Why then did you ask for five high grade spirit stones?” Lu Wu Jie asked, puzzled. If they were truly extraordinarily powerful, wouldn’t it be better to try to win them over? But Ning Xin had asked for such an astounding repayment from them instead.

Chapter 481: “An Opportunist (4)”

Ning Xin replied with a laugh: “Whether we can successfully win them over would depend largely on whether they are willing. If the men show themselves to be friendly and accepting of us, I would naturally reject any form of repayment when we get to the Spirit Moon Lake. Wouldn’t that leave a much deeper impression than if we were to have just agreed to lead them to their destination for nothing?”

To entice and to win someone over, one must never start off from a lowered stance. Ning Xin knew she had to raise her status and worth before those men.

Lu Wei Jie did not fully understand what Ning Xin meant, but felt that what Ning Xin said must be right.

As the team progressed forward, a black shadow stood within the tall trees. He released a tiny black snake onto the layer of dried leaves that covered the ground under the tree and the tiny black snake quickly slid under the leaves and the tiny body quickly disappeared without a trace.

....

Jun Wu Xie and her team found a water source and Qiao Chu and the others washed the blood off their bodies and sat on the tree stumps to nibble at their rations.

After a while, Ye Sha suddenly appeared before them. Qiao Chu and the others who had been waiting immediately stood up.

“Your subordinate has successfully tracked down the target.” Ya Sha reported, his head lowered and kneeling on one knee.

“How many people in total?” Jun Wu Xie asked.

“Twenty seven, and on top of that, they just joined up with a team not of the Zephyr Academy and are proceeding towards the Spirit Moon Lake.” Ya Sha replied.

Moving together with a team of people not from the Zephyr Academy?

The news that Ye Sha brought back to them was rather shocking for them.

“Do they still have something up their sleeves? Or have they enlisted outside help?” Qiao Chu rubbed at his chin. He had never met Ning Xin and Yin Yan but in his mind, he had projected an image of two sinister looking villains colluding with each other rubbing their hands in glee.

Fan Jin had been about to speak but after Qiao Chu’s quick accusations, he just remained silent, and his body slumped.

Fei Yan noticed Fan Jin’s low spirits and gave Qiao Chu a light punch. Qiao Chu stuck his tongue out and looked apologetically at Fei Yan, waving his hand in awkwardness.

“Spirit Moon Lake? What for?” Jun Wu Xie ignored Qiao Chu’s opinions and asked.

“The team seems to need to get to the Spirit Moon Lake to find some herbs. Ning Xin agreed to lead the way and the team would give her the spirit stones from high grade Spirit Beasts in return.” Ye Sha reported plainly.

“Five high grade Spirit Beasts! ? That little vixen called Ning Xin is really merciless with her terms!” Qiao Chu was shocked. To the others just like him, before they met Jun Xie, they had been living in abject poverty and they knew only too well the fee asked to just lead the way was incredibly atrocious.

Fan Jin’s head lowered and he did not even want to look at any of them.

“Did you find out the identities of those men?” Jun Wu Xie asked, as she stroked at the little black cat’s fur while deep in thought. She has promised Fan Jin to spare Ning Xin and Yin Yan and if they did not come provoke her, she would not care whether

they lived or died.

Ye Sha hesitated a moment before he spoke: “Several of the men in the team coincides with people in the memories Master Wu Yao gave me.”

“Gave you memories?” Jun Wu Xie asked, her eyes narrowed.

“Ye Sha’s memories.” Ye Sha said.

“.....” Qiao Chu and the others heard Ye Sha and Jun Xie’s conversation and were finding it rather frightening.

“Which are they?” Jun Wu Xie had a rough idea what Ye Sha meant. The memories of the previous Ye Sha had been passed onto the current Ye Sha through some unusual method by Jun Wu Yao.

Ye Sha raised his head to reply: “One of them is from the Rui Lin Army, General Long Qi, and the other one is Rong Heng, from the Cloud Treading Peak. As for the others, your subordinate only knows that they belonged to the Rui Lin Army and Cloud Treading Peak, but I do not know their individual names.”

At the moment that Ye Sha’s words ended, Jun Wu Xie’s hand that was stroking the little black cat suddenly froze!

Chapter 482: “The Most Ferocious Strike Force (1)”

“The Rui Lin Army?” Fan Jin raised his head suddenly and he looked at Ye Sha with a look of disbelief on his face.

“What is this Rui Lin Army?” Qiao Chu’s face was puzzled, not understanding why Fan Jin had such a strong reaction.

Fan Jin stared at Qiao Chu and saw that Hua Yao and the others were all similarly seemingly clueless and he asked incredulous: “You have not heard of the Rui Lin Army?”

Qiao Chu nodded.

“The Rui Lin Army is an incredibly ferocious strike force of the Qi Kingdom’s. The Qi Kingdom is just an extremely small power standing among various powerful states and the lands they occupied were considered just a trifling speck and their insignificantly small population were in no way comparable with any of the other states surrounding it. But the Qi Kingdom was still able to build itself up amongst all the individually stronger forces that ringed them based on just one lone reason, the widely feared and most ferocious strike force, the Rui Lin Army. The army wasn’t really big, and it is rumoured that they numbered merely one hundred thousand. But each and every single soldier in there possessed extraordinary might and power and no matter which force or power that had ever met them on the battlefield, every single one of the survivors eventually found themselves all haunted by frightening dreams after it.” Fan Jin had always admired the strength of the strict regimental military, and he had heard a lot about the widely famous Rui Lin Army.

It could be said that the fame of the Rui Lin Army shone much brighter outside than inside the Qi Kingdom itself.

“Extraordinary skills and power? Are all their ring spirits of

exceptionally high grade?” Qiao Chu asked, deeply curious.

Fan Jin shook his head.

“The Rui Lin Army’s soldiers are famous not for their extraordinary spiritual power or exemplary ring spirits. What really earned them the fame of being known as the most ferocious strike force is the spirit when they stepped onto a battlefield. They do not know retreat or surrender and everybody says their soldiers possessed souls that fought to the death and not a single one of them would fear and would stare at Death straight into his eyes. In a war between states and countries, one single man’s strength limited what he could achieve, but when put together into a force where all the men were bound tightly in flawless cohesion and who did not fear death, they become a supreme ferocious strike force, the ultimate weapon. Did you know when the Qi Kingdom was just newly founded, in their first battle against an opposing kingdom, the Rui Lin Army took the vanguard. The Rui Lin Army numbered three hundred thousand then! And after that battle, the Rui Lin Army had only about eighty thousand men left! All of those two hundred over soldiers had not taken a single step backwards in that battle, they resolutely used their flesh and blood to resist the enemy, to protect every square inch of their lands!” Fan Jin was narrating all this in a fervour, almost as though he had witnessed that dreadful and terrible battle with his own eyes.

“You must realise that the enemy soldiers that the Rui Lin Army were up against numbered a grand million! An army a million strong! Outnumbered by more than three men to one, but they nevertheless dug in and frightened the enemy into retreat, and they never dared approach the Qi Kingdom’s borders ever again! That resolute and unwavering strength of spirit cowered the enemy and the unparalleled deterrence the Qi Kingdom gained was bought with the blood of those two hundred over thousand soldiers of the Rui Lin Army!”

Qiao Chu and the others listened, eyes wide in rapture. They did

not know much about anything in the Lower Realm. Things like the different states and countries and their armies were all things they were not familiar with as well. They had only focused on making themselves get stronger and to find the Dark Emperor's tomb, that would gain them sufficient strength to rival the Twelve Palaces, for them to exact their revenge.

They had not known that in these lands that they had lived in for so many years, had actually contained such a group of valiant men whose blood burned so fiercely, who dared spit in Death's eye, and choose to die than turn from the enemy, just to protect their lands and their people!

The teammates were all at an age when they were all brimming over with youthful exuberance and they were all caught up in the fervour, greatly inspired with the tale of valiant heroes.

At that moment, before any of them had even seen the men from the Rui Lin Army, they already held great reverence in their hearts for the widely famed, most ferocious strike force in the whole Lower Realm.

Only Jun Wu Xie was the lone exception, who had quietly listened to Fan Jin's narration, and lowered her eyes.

Everyone only knew that the Rui Lin Army were brave and strong, but they did not know that the Rui Lin Army held the highest death toll for its commanders. As in every battle, the commanders of the Rui Lin Army were always leading their men in their charges, always at the vanguard.

The Qi Kingdom was too small, and its citizens weak, hence, they could not afford to lose.

As the moment they lost, it would mean the kingdom is lost!

Chapter 483: “The Most Ferocious Strike Force (2)”

The Qi Kingdom cannot afford to lose, and they dared not lose.

The fame of being undefeated, was forced out of them due to the unthinkable alternative!

If they lost, they would lose their homeland.

Jun Wu Xie distinctly remembered Jun Xian’s sorrowful expression when they had spoken and chatted about it. Jun Xian would always have a forced smile on his face, but his eyes would always be sorrowful when he was reminded of the pain of loss.

The prominence and notoriety of the Rui Lin Army was bought with the very lives of its selfless soldiers. Everybody only knew of the ferocity and strength of the Rui Lin Army, but none remembered the countless deaths of the martyrs who gave their lives for their countrymen.

If he could, Jun Xian would willingly give up all fame and fortune, than allow the very men who braved the various battlefields at his side.

The members of the Jun Family, must never feel proud of the Rui Lin Army’s fearless reputation!

This was the word passed down from Jun Xian himself.

As it should and must be a humiliation, when a commander was not able to bring the soldiers he led into battle back home alive, and the blame must be laid on the commander’s incompetence.

Jun Wu Xie did not know when sentiment had started, but she remembered her grandfather’s and uncle’s sorrowful and determined faces when they told her that.

“The Battle Spirits Forest isn’t too far from the Qi Kingdom, but I still wouldn’t have expected to see anyone from the Rui Lin Army

in here.” Fan Jin was looking rather excited. The heroes that he had revered and admired for a long time might appear before his eyes and he was feeling really excited like a kid all over again.

Qiao Chu cleared his throat lightly and said to the excited Fan Jin: “Might I point out that those gods of battle that you mentioned earlier are now with Ning Xin and her team, and it seems that they have been deeply taken advantage of.”

With that one statement, Fan Jin’s passionate face suddenly as if he had been doused with a whole pail of cold water!

Fan Jin had thought that the terms that Ning Xin had asked for were extremely unreasonable as well.

“Let’s go.” Jun Wu Xie had been silent a long while and she suddenly spoke, lifting the little black cat onto her shoulders where it usually perched.

“Little Xie, where are we going?” Qiao Chu asked of Jun Xie quizzically. He knew Ning Xin was taking advantage of people again, but it shouldn’t matter to them as they had no ties with those men. He could only sympathise with the men from the Rui Lin Army in his heart.

“Spirit Moon Lake.” Jun Wu Xie said simply.

If Ning Xin would just leave her alone, she really couldn’t be bothered about her. But Ning Xin had chosen to take such great advantage of the Rui Lin Army’s men, Jun Wu Xie could not allow Ning Xin to have it her way.

Her grandfather’s men, must never be subjected to such abuse by such a malicious and manipulative person!

With those words, everyone with the exception of Ye Sha were surprised and at a loss of words at Jun Xie’s sudden decision.

“Wh..... why are we going to the Spirit Moon Lake?” Qiao Chu’s eyes were wide with wonder. Jun Xie had never been a nosy person and when Fan Jin had shared the stories so fervently, Jun Xie’s

face had remained cold and otherwise expressionless.

Was Jun Xie's blood stirred up by the stories and wanted to go save the men from the Rui Lin Army from being abused?

Jun Wu Xie gave Qiao Chu a cold glance but did not say a word to him.

Qiao Chu gulped, but was somewhat getting used to Jun Xie ignoring his frequent outbursts.

"But we do not know where the Spirit Moon Lake is located." Rong Ruo had taken out her map to study when Jun Xie had mentioned it earlier. Forget about finding the Spirit Moon Lake on it, the map did not even show the area that they were currently standing.

"Please follow me. I have released an Ink Snake and the Ink Snake will continue to follow them. We will only need to follow the Ink Snake's presence and we will be able to locate them." Ye Sha replied stoically.

The teammates exchanged meaningful glances. They were all intensely curious about Ye Sha's identity, but they all politely kept all their questions to themselves.

After Fan Jin's reverential narration of the Rui Lin Army, Qiao Chu and the others had gained a very good and positive impression of them and when Jun Xie said that they would be going to where the Rui Lin Army's men were, they did not object in the slightest.

After they organized themselves a little, the teammates followed behind Ye Sha, as they looked out for signs that the Ink Snake had left behind, and made their way towards the Battle Spirits Forest's Spirit Moon Lake.....

Chapter 484: “The Most Ferocious Strike Force (3)”

While they were making their way towards the Spirit Moon Lake, Ning Xin asked Lu Wei Jie to try to chat Long Qi and the other men up but he was completely ignored.

Long Qi did not utter a single word in reply and just put forth a darkened face, refusing to saying anything.

The ungraciously snubbed Lu Wei Jie went back to Ning Xin gloomily. He had always enjoyed endless fawning and unbridled admiration from everyone in the Zephyr Academy and always had gaggle of disciples surrounding him all the time. He was not used to being rebuffed so completely and his face showed his displeasure as he sulked beside her.

When Ning Xin saw that even Lu Wei Jie had failed to gain some favour, she got Lu Wei Jie to take the lead moving forward while she slowed down and fell to the back of the group, to move together with Long Qi and his men, a sweet smile plastered on her face.

“Seeing that you and your men are unfamiliar with the Battle Spirits Forest, this should be your first time here. I am wondering what you and your men seek at the Spirit Moon Lake? To be honest, my father is the Vice Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy and is extremely familiar with the Battle Spirits Forest. The Zephyr Academy conducts two Spirit Hunts every year and we frequent the Battle Spirits Forest here. We would always bring back many things from the forest when the Spirit Hunt ends and if we have stock of what you seek here, wouldn’t that save you a lot of time and effort?” Ning Xin had a beautiful face and her smile had melted countless hearts. Her tone of voice had been consciously lowered and her voice flowed like sparkling water flowing smoothly along a little brook, making it extremely hard for

people to feel any dislike.

In fact, if she had not made such an outrageous demand earlier, the impression she would have given to Long Qi and the other men would have been very good.

Long Qi frowned though, his face a mask of impatience.

The youths repeated attempts at striking up seemingly casual conversation rubbed the straightforward and candid Long Qi the wrong way.

Since they had already agreed to the deal, they each only had to deliver their own end of the agreement. This obvious attempts to initiate more interaction made the stalwart men who lived and died by the sword extremely uncomfortable.

The other soldiers following beside Long Qi shot discreet glances at Ning Xin, seeing the beautiful face and her sweet amicable smile. But not the slightest sign of admiration showed on the faces of all the men.

To them, with that level of looks and that level of grace, cannot be compared to their very own Young Miss!

The Rui Lin Army barracks were filled with a whole bunch of stalwart and resolute men. They were usually shut off from the world and were mostly deeply immersed in training, resulting in all of the men rarely having the chance to come into contact with the opposite gender. The only female that appeared frequently before them was the Lin Palace's Young Miss, Jun Wu Xie.

In the beginning, before Jun Wu Xie changed her soul, the men from the Rui Lin Army were deeply ashamed of the reputation garnered by their very own Young Miss. But due to her undeniable blood ties to the Jun Family, they had no choice but to bow in acquiescence. But after Jun Wu Xie's core changed, every action that she carried out from then on broke every longheld preconception they had of their Young Miss that made every single

soldier within the Rui Lin Army go from utter contempt to unquestioned reverence and total submission.

In the hearts of these courageous and ferocious soldiers, the most flawless beauty under the skies and throughout the vast lands was their Young Miss and the most outstanding female was their Young Miss to which none could compare.

With such a shining premium Jun Wu Xie as the benchmark set in the men's hearts, any female who attempted to allure or secure a place within the men's hearts ultimately would only face utter and thorough failure.

The girl's looks were lacking, not fit to be even compared to their Young Miss.

Her eyes lacked life, unable to compare to their Young Miss.

She lacked charm, her smile obsequious, inferior to their Young Miss in every way! Their cold, proud and breathtaking Young Miss!

And, was the lass blind or what? Did she not see the obvious and blatant "do not disturb" expression on their General's face? They were still relentless in trying to get closer to him and blabbering nonstop. With the terms stated as repayment for her to lead them to their destination, nobody in their right mind, unless they had money to burn, would agree to her offer of getting what they need from her.

She was still completely oblivious to the fact that she had been completely despised from head to toe, in front of all these Rui Lin Army soldiers, and Ning Xin still had her sweet and amicable smile stuck across her face before them.

Chapter 485: “The Most Ferocious Strike Force (4)”

Those occasional glances that turned her way however, did not make Ning Xin even think of backing off on her advances but further encouraged her as she started feeling secretly pleased with herself.

Ning Xin had always been extremely confident of her looks and when she complemented her attractive good looks with her consciously moulded image that she built up for herself, she had always gained an advantage for her efforts. Hence, she would never in her wildest dreams expect that the burly and boorish military men would disregard her beauty so completely.

She thought that the soldiers were just like all the males she had previously encountered, secretly mesmerized by her.

“No need.” Long Qi did not even turn his head her way and rejected her flat out.

The sweet smile on Ning Xin’s face froze a brief moment but she recovered quickly.

“You don’t need to be so distant, since fate willed us to meet here, it could all be predestined. We have still quite a ways before we would reach the Spirit Moon Lake, would you need me to tell you a little bit more about what the situation is like over at the Spirit Moon Lake?” Ning Xin asked, still smiling, not showing any signs of retreat even with Long Qi’s outright refusal.

Long Qi’s frown grew deeper. He had wanted to reject once more. But when he thought about it, it was true that they had never been to the Spirit Moon Lake and the only thing they knew was only when Mu Chen told them that they could get those herbs in the vicinity of the Spirit Moon Lake and it would not hurt them if they gathered a little more information about the place which might

help them by making it easier for them to search and locate those herbs.

“I shall have to trouble you then.” Long Qi replied, after assessing the situation and he suppressed the impatience that gnawed at his heart.

A smile came into Ning Xin’s eyes and although she saw that this person did not seem to like conversing with others, she was however confident she knew exactly how to deal with men like this.

“The Spirit Moon Lake is vast, and is considered to be the main source of water within the Battle Spirits Forest. It is rumoured that the Spirit Moon Lake’s water can nourish the spirit and it attracts a great number of Spirit Beasts. Many Spirit Beasts are usually seen in the vicinity of the lake as they come to the lake to drink. If they sense any strange and unfamiliar presence approach, there is a high chance that they would attack. So, I would suggest that when we reach the place, that you and your men do not go straight to the Spirit Moon Lake, but to observe the surroundings first, to see if there are any Spirit Beasts around, to avoid any casualties.” Ning Xin harboured the intention to gain Long Qi’s friendship and she decided that her words needed to contain certain elements of truth.

Long Qi replied instead: “There is no need for all that trouble, if there are any Spirit Beasts around, we’ll just need to kill it.”

Ning Xin was shocked at Long Qi’s decisive words. He must have possessed strong confidence in his strength for him to use such strong words. In the beginning, when that youth had brought the news that he witnessed a group of men killing a high grade Spirit Beast, she had been doubtful. But after seeing Long Qi’s confidence and feeling the impressive aura he gave out, she started to believe the youth’s words a little more.

“Haha, words from the mighty are different indeed. Brother

Long's skills must be really impressive and Little Xin is greatly humbled." Ning Xin smiled gently, her eyelashes fluttered as she stole glances at Long Qi's countenance shyly.

However, Long Qi did not react in the slightest, his face remaining cold and distant.

"Brother Long must have gone through much trial and tribulations. The journey ahead of us is still long and dull, would Brother Long be interested to share your past glories and exploits with Little Xin?" Ning Xin smiled very sweetly, looking every inch just like a bashful young lady.

If that had been someone else, and was shown so much adoration by a beautiful and shy young lady, the man might have very well been completely swooned and held spellbound. But Long Qi's face did not change in the slightest, completely unmoved.

"Miss Ning." Long Qi stopped in his tracks suddenly.

"Brother Long, you do not need to be so distant. Just call me Little Xin." Ning Xin blushed and lowered her head, to hide the glee showing within her eyes at that moment.

"If you do not have any other information about the Spirit Moon Lake to tell us, then you do not need to say anything more. I have other things I need to discuss with my men and I would implore Miss Ning to excuse us." Long Qi looked coldly at Ning Xin, not bothering to show any manners or courtesy, driving her away without any hesitation.

Chapter 486: “The Most Ferocious Strike Force (5)”

Ning Xin’s face changed then. Her beautiful smile looked a little forced as she quelled the anger that surged in her chest. Her forced smile was still frozen on her face as she turned to leave.

It was only after Ning Xin left them that the several Rui Lin soldiers heaved a sigh of relief.

“What was that smell on that girl? That strong scent almost gagged me.” One of the soldiers rubbed his nose vigorously and the only thing he remembered about her was that overpowering scent that assaulted his nose, almost making his eyes tear when she was with them.

“Boss, do you think that lass has fallen for you? She was giving you the “eye” several times and she was even blushing to boot!” Another soldier “eyed” Long Qi with a laugh, poking fun at their general.

“Was she really blushing red? And not paled to white? When I looked at her before she left, there wasn’t even any colour in her lips!”

“All of you stop all that gabbing.” Long Qi gave the soldiers an “eye” of his own. “When we get to the Spirit Moon Lake, go immediately to find those Spirit Beasts and pay them off to send them off on their way.”

Although the battle hardened Long Qi did not know much about the complicated relationship between a man and a woman, but he was rather astute. He could see that although Ning Xin was just a young and youthful girl, her underlying intentions were not that simple. The way that she repeatedly tried to probe into their situation, was strictly taboo to a military man out on a mission.

“Yes Sir!”

.....

“Senior Ning, what’s wrong?” Yin Yan hurried forward to ask as he stared at the pale faced Ning Xin, as she rejoined the team with a mouth twisted in rage. Even Lu Wei Jie noticed the abnormality in Ning Xin and turned his head to look at her.

Ning Xin took a deep breath and suppressed the rage within her.

[Who do those scoundrels think they are? She spared them a little courtesy and they think they are all that great? How dare they spurn her like that ! ?]

Ning Xin, who had always been used to being universally adored and fawned upon was really greatly angered by Long Qi’s cold and spurious treatment.

She had never been slapped by such indifference and total disregard to her person before!

“There has been a change of plans. These people are just hopelessly stubborn and a bunch of boorish and uncouth men who don’t know what’s good for them!” Ning Xin said angrily as she flung out her sleeve, her usual smile disappeared, without a trace.

“What really happened? What had angered you so badly?” Lu Wu Jie hurried over to comfort the beauty. “I see those men as just brutes who possessed great power and I did not really approve of you consorting with those barbarians earlier. If they are not receptive to our kind intentions, just leave them alone. We, as esteemed disciples of the Zephyr Academy, would not need to miss that little bit of might they have.”

Lu Wei Jie had initially agreed to Ning Xin’s plan, but having been shown and rebuffed by Long Qi’s cold and distant expression the whole journey, his proud and egoistic personality had not taken the rejection well. And now that even his beautiful Ning Xin had been similarly unceremoniously scorned and spurned, his feeling of displeasure was greatly intensified.

“Hmph! They chose to reject the proffered wine so we’ll give them poison instead! They asked for it! They wanted me to lead them all this way and they think they can be rid of me with just a few high grade Spirit Beasts? I, Ning Xin is worth much more than that!” Ning Xin’s eyes narrowed and the gentleness in her eyes faded completely, suddenly replaced with venom and malice.

Yin Yan who was standing on the side froze and did not dare say anything in answer. It was Lu Wei Jie who suddenly spoke instead: “What do you intend to do? If we end up having to fight them, I don’t think we’re their match.”

If those men had not been so powerful, Lu Wei Jie would have thrashed them up so badly they would be picking up their teeth. But faced with Long Qi, he could only swallow his rage and repress the anger within.

Ning Xin laughed chillingly and said: “Why would we need to dirty our hands? The Battle Spirits Forest is filled with Spirit Beasts afterall.”

“But they are even able to take down high grade Spirit Beasts.....”

“What about those above high grade?” Ning Xin’s mouth curled up at the corners slightly, as she turned her head back at the group of several men trailing the team, and her eyes almost dripped with venom.

Chapter 487: “Guardian Grade Spirit Beast (1)”

Jun Wu Xie followed behind Ye Sha to gradually catch up with Long Qi and his men. After traversing through a large area of the dense forest, they finally came to a hidden lake nestled within the thick trees.

The lake’s surface reflected the sun’s rays looking like a massive pool of silver, its ripples stirring up bright brilliant stars as they shimmered within, a resplendent sight to behold. At the edge of the Spirit Moon Lake, several Spirit Beasts had their heads lowered to the water to drink and at the moment that the presence of Jun Wu Xie and her team were felt, the Spirit Beasts bolted and scattered in all directions, running into the dark cover of the trees, disappearing without a trace.

“This is the Spirit Moon Lake? But..... Where are Ning Xin and the Rui Lin Army’s men?” Qiao Chu peered to look all around but could not see any other figures besides the Spirit Beasts that had bolted.

Jun Wu Xie turned to look at Ye Sha and Ye Sha suddenly frowned.

“What is it?” Jun Wu Xie asked.

“The Ink Snake suddenly died. But just before death claimed it, it had followed that team of people past the Spirit Moon Lake. It seems that their destination was not to just come to the Spirit Moon Lake.” Ye Sha reported all his findings immediately to Jun Wu Xie.

Just as all of them were still contemplating Ye Sha’s words, a rumble shook the ground under their feet suddenly!

The massive trees that ringed the Spirit Moon Lake shook and rustled, all those Spirit Beasts that had hid themselves in the forest

sensed the approach of a terrifying threat. They ran and bolted once again and the peaceful and tranquil scene at the was suddenly torn and shattered!

“What is happening! ?” A series of unidentifiable tremors under their feet made Fei Yan start to feel extremely uneasy.

Jun Wu Xie’s eyes narrowed and she resolutely said: “Bring us to where the Ink Snake died.”

“Yes!”

The team moved immediately and while they sped forward towards their destination, a ear piercing roar suddenly reverberated in their ears!

That thunderous roar sounded louder and more majestic than any they had ever heard!

That sound alone was enough to make everyone’s blood surge and boil within!

The roar continued to reverberate through the surrounding trees and the leaves rustled violently in the sound waves kicked up!

“Guardian Grade..... Spirit Beast.....” Fan Jin’s face turned white as a sheet. The magnitude of that roar made him feel a distinct impending sense of doom creep into his heart.

He had seen a Guardian Grade Spirit Beast once with his father and that experience had been deeply branded into his heart and he had never been able to forget it.

“What did you say?” Qiao Chu turned his head to stare at Fan Jin, his eyes wide.

Fan Jin replied with a deathly white face: “That was definitely a Guardian Grade Spirit Beast, it can’t be anything else..... The Spirit Moon Lake sits right in the core of the vast Battle Spirits Forest and the water from the Spirit Moon Lake is the best nourishment all the Spirit Beasts can get. Hence, high Grade Spirit Beasts

frequently roam in the vicinity of the Spirit Moon Lake, and even the rarely seen..... Guardian Grade Spirit Beasts.”

No one in the Zephyr Academy had even dared to dream of hunting a Guardian Grade Spirit Beast. It is widely rumoured that the power of a Guardian Grade Spirit Beast far surpassed that of the pinnacle purple spirit! Not to only mention the disciples of the Zephyr Academy taking part in the Spirit Hunt, even if all the teachers and Masters of the academy were confronted with a Guardian Grade Spirit Beast, they would have no other option than to flee!

Fan Jin had never dreamt that he would ever once again see a Guardian Grade Spirit Beast!

“The direction that the roar is coming from, is exactly where the Ink Snake was killed.” Ye Sha slowed down his pace a little to share that shocking piece of news!

Ye Sha’s Ink Snake had secretly tailed Long Qi and his men right from the start and its sudden death had already been greatly suspicious, and now they just heard, at the location where the Ink Snake died, there was a Guardian Grade Spirit Beast! ? What were they getting themselves into! ?

Did that also mean that Long Qi and his men that the Ink Snake had been shadowing all this while were confronted with the Guardian Grade Spirit Beast!?

Chapter 488: “Guardian Grade Spirit Beast (2)”

Since the beginning of time, never in the Lower Realm had anyone heard that anyone was able to hunt down a Guardian grade Spirit Beast.

Even the legendary purple spirit, which was the pinnacle of strength could only run when faced with a Guardian grade Spirit Beast!

It must be known that the fact was no purple spirit user had appeared among the people for a long time! Even in the Rui Lin Army, none existed at that time!

Upon hearing that devastating roar, not only Fan Jin’s face looked sick, but even Qiao Chu and the rest did not fare much better. They might not have known who the Rui Lin Army was, but after hearing of their heroic and selfless exploits, those men have earned respect from the teammates.

“Why would they meet a Guardian grade Spirit Beast? All the Spirit Beasts here wouldn’t initiate an attack unless they are first provoked or attacked, and then did they retaliate!” Rong Ruo said, her complexion not looking too well either.

After Rong Ruo said those words, the teammates all suddenly came to the same conclusion.

The men from the Rui Lin Army were all battle hardened and undergone much trials and tribulations, they would not be men that would be rash or ignorant in situations like this. They couldn’t have possibly gone to provoke a Guardian grade Spirit Beast that they knew very well they wouldn’t be able to beat. And the only people who would possibly provoke the Guardian grade Spirit Beast could only be the people in Ning Xin’s team who harboured evil intentions against the men from the Rui Lin Army!

“It’s over! This time it’s really over.....” Qiao Chu scratched at his head furiously, his heart torn from the fact that the heroes he had heard about were about to be killed by such a vicious plot.

Suddenly, Qiao Chu had barely finished his sentence when a black figure whizzed past away from them!

Jun Wu Xie was seated upon the black beast’s back, like an arrow shot from a fully pulled back bow. And Ye Sha immediately shot out from the group to catch up with Jun Wu Xie!

“Little Xie! What are you doing! ?” Qiao Chu and his gang suddenly realised what was happening as they saw Jun Wu Xie rushing towards the source of the roars, and their hearts all skipped a beat in shock!

Had Jun Xie gone mad? Judging from his actions, was he intending to go save the men from the Rui Lin Army?

What kind of a joke was that?

Having been with Jun Xie for quite awhile now, Qiao Chu and his gang knew what kind of personality Jun Xie had. He was calm and decisive and was never one to poke his nose into other people’s business. Just what was it that made him decide now to risk everything and go save people they had never even met! ?

He must have known that by rushing to the men’s aid, he was rushing to confront not just any ordinary Spirit Beast! But a Guardian grade Spirit Beast!

Spirit Beasts were naturally highly resistant to poison and the poisons that Jun Xie was most highly skilled in would not work on a Guardian grade Spirit Beast, his decision would most undoubtedly kill him!

“Damn! Has Jun Xie really gone mad! ?” Qiao Chu said through gritted teeth, and he had no time to think further on it but to summon Rolly to the fore.

The massive Yin Yang bear appeared suddenly among the

teammates. It bent and lowered its back, all four of its paws on the ground.

Qiao Chu's tall frame quickly leapt onto its back. Hua Yao, Fei Yan and Rong Ruo quickly followed and mounted themselves on Rolly's back.

"Rolly! Follow them! Quick!" They would never allow Jun Xie to ride off into his doom on his own!

Having received Qiao Chu's command, Rolly sprinted immediately. The lumbering body moved amazingly quickly, with Rolly's massively wide strides eating up the distance, its speed seemingly like a little whirlwind!

Fan Jin stood in his spot, eyes wide and speechless as he watched Qiao Chu and his gang speed off after Jun Xie, his mind a complete blank.

Why would the men from the Rui Lin Army suddenly encounter a Guardian grade Spirit Beast? Everyone knew very well how that had happened, but not one of them spoke a single word about it.

Fan Jin was not that dumb either. He thought about it for awhile and he could guess what had really happened as well.

But that realisation was a fact that he could not accept easily.

After struggling with his emotions a while more, Fan Jin finally clenched his jaw in determination, and ran towards the same direction that he had seen Qiao Chu and the others depart!

Chapter 489: “Guardian Grade Spirit Beast (3)”

Within a part of the forest, rows of trees were being felled and trampled into the ground. Shockwaves swept over the ground and the fallen leaves flew and billowed within the rush of the air kicked up, spinning and whirling in the howling wind.

The thick heavy scent of blood hung heavily in the air, as an immensely huge shape towered between the earth and the skies. Deafening roars erupted from the titanic beast, threatening to split the earth!

It was a Guardian grade Spirit Beast of epic proportions and the claws on its four limbs were razor sharp. Nine long white tails swayed in the air behind the beast and whatever those tails touched, be it trees or rocks, they broke and crumbled easily before the overwhelming force. Two twisted horns curled on top of its head and its scarlet eyes were filled with rage.

The beast’s body was white throughout and over its smooth radiant fur, a faint shimmering red totem glow could almost be seen!

A raging Guardian grade Spirit Beast could destroy everything before it!

Under the raining stones, Long Qi zipped around to haul an injured Rui Lin Army soldier to rest on a tree stump and told him to hide himself.

One of the soldier’s arm had been cut by the Guardian grade Spirit Beast’s Wind Blade, a single cut nearly severing half of his arm off, almost hanging just from his flesh and sinew. The soldier had lost a great amount of blood and his face was drained of all colour, his body temperature dropping quickly.

“General, leave us..... You..... you should bring Rong Heng and

the others away from here.....” The injured soldier said, tugging at Long Qi’s sleeve with his good hand.

“A Guardian grade Spirit Beast is not what we can take on. Bring Rong Heng and the others away from here while Little Wu and the guys are still able to hold the Spirit Beast back! Our deaths would not matter that much compared to the disciples of Master Mu. To the Rui Lin Army, those disciples are more important than anything else.” The injured soldiers gasped heavily for breath after those words, his complexion looking worse than before.

Long Qi’s expression was stern. Things had taken a sudden and unexpected turn that made this expedition unimaginably perilous.

A Guardian grade Spirit Beast, he had never even seen one before!

“I will not abandon my brothers.” Long Qi clenched his jaw tightly. His body was already covered in wounds and within the team, he was the strongest and most highly skilled. And it due to that fact that he received the most attacks in the battle with the Spirit Beast. If it was not for his weapon ring spirit’s ability to transform into strong sturdy armour, he might not be still alive now!

Long Qi turned to look at the injured Rong Heng and his fellow disciples. There were three disciples from the Cloud Treading Peak on this expedition to the Battle Spirits Forest and when the Guardian grade Spirit Beast attacked, all the men from the Rui Lin Army had quickly protected the three disciples with everything they had.

The soldiers were well aware that the Rui Lin Army numbered many more and it would not hurt the force much even if they lost the few of them. But the disciples of the Cloud Treading Peak cannot be allowed to come to harm. By protecting every single one of those disciples, they would be able to bring new strength to the soldiers of the Rui Lin Army in the future!

Rong Heng and his fellow disciples were in a dire situation. Although the soldiers from the Rui Lin Army were fighting to protect them with their lives, the shockwaves that swept through them from the Guardian grade Spirit Beast were not what medical practitioners like them could withstand, unscathed.

“General Long, we have dragged you down with us.” Rong Heng looked at Long Qi, his face pale. If it was not for them, their skills from being in the Rui Lin Army would at least allow them to escape from the Spirit Beast even if they could not defeat it.

“This has nothing to do with you, I was too careless.” Long Qi narrowed his eyes and anger flashed menacingly.

“No one would have expected the young youths to harbour such insidious intentions against us. If they had not provoked and led the Spirit Beast to us, we would not be in such a dire situation! And all those hateful wretches had even run away after leading the Spirit Beast to us!” Another Cloud Treading Peak disciple spat out those words in disgust!

Chapter 490: “Consecutive Slaps – Third Form (1)”

A Guardian grade Spirit Beast was something that no one dared provoke. Long Qi had initially agreed to hunt down five high grade Spirit Beasts for Ning Xin and her team and when they reached the Spirit Moon Lake, he had kept his word and went out in search for signs of high grade Spirit Beasts. Never had he ever thought that Ning Xin and her teammates would lead a raging Guardian grade Spirit Beast right up to them! And after the youths led the Guardian grade Spirit Beast to come right beside Long Qi and his men, they all took the opportunity to escape, dragging Long Qi and his right into the abyss!

When that scene replayed through his mind, Long Qi was absolutely seething in rage, but the situation did not allow him time to continue dwelling on that!

Five Rui Lin Army soldiers were still battling the Guardian grade Spirit Beast and their power was absolutely no match for the Guardian grade Spirit Beast. But in order to buy a little more time for Rong Heng and his fellow disciples to escape, they fought valiantly, laying their lives on the line. The tacit understanding developed over many years of battles between the men allowed them to hold out a little but they were all already badly wounded and they were all covered in blood. The blood dripped and scattered with their movements and the ground was soon covered in those scarlet splatters!

“I will need to trouble you men to bring my brother with you. The rest of us will continue to try to buy you more time.” Long Qi handed the badly injured soldiers over to Rong Heng and his fellow disciples and rushed into the frenzied battle without even looking back!

“General !” The soldier looked on with despair as he stared at

Long Qi's resolute back!

A distance away from the battle, Ning Xin was well hidden behind a cluster of dense trees. Her venomous eyes stared intently at the raging battle to the death and her lips curled into a vicious smile.

“Senior Ning, they are not a match for the Guardian grade Spirit Beast.” Yin Yan said standing beside Ning Xin as he watched the men from the Rui Lin Army being pushed back step by step by the Spirit Beast.

“I had expected them not to be able to handle it. The Guardian grade Spirit Beasts do not eat people and it will leave after those men are dead. Those men had killed several high grade Spirit Beasts earlier and they are sure to have the high grade spirit stones on them.” Ning Xin said with glee, her eyes shining with satisfaction.

Whoever dared embarrass her, would never escape her wrath!

That Escort Long had blatantly spurned her earlier kind offer and trampled on her pride. People like that only more than deserved to die!

Yin Yan lowered his head and remained silent. He was wary of Ning Xin's unbelievable viciousness. The team of men were outstanding in terms of strength and skills and just because they incurred the wrath of Ning Xin, they were led into a situation that they would have to pay for it with their very lives. Under that facade of a beautiful and sweet young lady, Ning Xin hid a venomous and malicious mind that terrified Yin Yan endlessly.

However, just at that moment, a commotion sounded from another direction caught Ning Xin's and her team's attention!

They saw two black shadows streak out from the trees, charging straight at the fully enraged Guardian grade Spirit Beast!

“What is that?” Ning Xin was greatly surprised. The black

shadows moved too quickly and she could not see what they were!

Struggling valiantly, Long Qi's back was torn by a swipe from the Guardian grade Spirit Beast. The armour on his back was shredded along with his flesh and his whole back suddenly became one garish scarlet gory mess. Another Rui Lin Army soldier hurried to hold off the Spirit Beast while two other soldiers dragged Long Qi speedily away from the battle!

The abrupt and violent movements elicited so much pain that Long Qi suddenly saw stars before his eyes!

The Guardian grade Spirit Beast was able to even shred the strong armour his ring spirit had transformed into! That heaven defying power was truly not something any of them was able to take on!

As he looked on at the battlefield in despair, Long Qi clenched his teeth together tightly to keep himself conscious. But he knew for sure then, that all of them would not leave the forest alive!

And just when the Guardian grade Spirit Beast had knocked the soldiers standing in its way flying in all directions and was readying itself to pounce on Long Qi, a black shadow suddenly smashed into the head of the Spirit Beast!

A loud crash reverberated!

Strong shockwaves from the force of the impact threw everyone into the air!

Long Qi was sailing through the air when suddenly, in the next moment, he found himself caught by a strong force before he could crash into the ground!

Chapter 491: “Consecutive Slaps – Third Form (2)”

It was a massive black beast. It had used its head to push against Long Qi's body which had been about to crash onto the ground. The beast coiled its thick black tail around Long Qi's body and shifted him to rest on its back. The agile beast then spun in the air and landed on its feet and laid Long Qi down gently in a clear area on the ground.

Long Qi felt his back burning as though it was in flames. He bit back on the unimaginable pain and struggled to stand, as he stared at the beast that had saved him, which had sped right back into the battlefield with amazing speed. The beast darted and dodged nimbly and it managed to bring all the soldiers of the Rui Lin Army back.

When he finally saw the beast clearly up close, Long Qi immediately froze rigid!

That black beast was such a familiar sight to his eyes! How many had he followed behind that very same black beast, his eyes fixed on the tiny figure seated upon its back, watching the figure with her head held high, and her unyielding straight back!

“If you don't want to die, be good and stay back.” A familiar voice sounded in his ears. That voice was cold, but it made a warmth like comforting warm spring water start to spread throughout his entire body!

Long Qi turned quickly at the sound of the voice, ignoring the pain that wrecked at him, and knelt down on one knee immediately towards the source of the voice! His proud head was lowered, and his voice was filled with reverence as he said: “Long Qi welcomes our Young Miss!”

His voice was tinged with a slight tremble!

It was due to his feelings of agitation, coupled with longing!

A tiny figure stood right before Long Qi. Although the figure was small in stature and looked to be weak, the appearance of that person however, gave Long Qi a greater sense of security than anyone else could!

That figure had a delicate countenance and his slightly unremarkable features were expressionless. But that cold and chilly presence stirred up feelings of awe in people!

Just as Long Qi's voice faded, the black beast had returned after retrieving all the other Rui Lin Army soldiers and it laid the men on the ground before it came to stand beside the figure.

The other Rui Lin Army soldiers who had been suddenly dragged away from the ferocious battle had still not recovered from the sudden appearance of the black beast. The black beast that had saved them shocked the men so badly they were all suddenly speechless!

As a member of the Rui Lin Army, they were often stationed at the Lin Palace to guard the safety of the three generations of the Jun Family. When the massacre within the Imperial City occurred, they had followed Long Qi partaken in the capture of the officials and witnessed a young lady's decisive and resolute actions that had won the day!

And in those memories, a formidable and majestic black beast had been present as well, just like the one before their eyes, looking exactly the same!

And at that moment, their general was kneeling before their eyes, at the petite figure that they all somehow find both familiar and strange at the same time.

They do not remember having encountered that face before, but the pair of eyes on it was another thing altogether. They suddenly felt the cold and chilly presence that the figure gave out and their

minds all came to astounding realisation!

“Young Miss!” The Rui Lin Army soldiers ignored the pain from their injuries and trembled as they all fell down on one knee before the figure, their voices shaking in excitement!

Under the expansive skies, the only people that could make a Rui Lin Army soldier kneel down in reverence, numbered just three!

Duke Jun Xian, His Highness Jun Qing, and one other person. The Young Miss of the Lin Palace, Jun Wu Xie!

And she was the only person that was able to control that terrifying massive black beast!

The countenance of the face might have changed, the clothes might be different, but the men would never mistake the figure for anyone else. Standing before them, accompanied by the black beast, could only be the goddess in their hearts. Jun Wu Xie!

The one person who had, for the Lin Palace, and for the Rui Lin Army, created a miracle for single handedly!

However, the tiny figure did not acknowledge any of the genuflections shown to her nor grace them with a reply. Right before the eyes of all the men from the Rui Lin Army, she hopped onto the back of the black beast, threw down over ten bottles of medicine and elixirs, and loped off into the distance with the black beast, charging right at the Guardian grade Spirit Beast who had almost taken the lives of Long Qi and his men earlier!

Chapter 492: “Consecutive Slaps – Third Form (3)”

The hearts of Long Qi and his men jumped! And before they could even react, several figures suddenly appeared, having broken out through the trees!

Several good looking youths were seated upon the back of a humongous bear and they shot right past Long Qi and his men!

“Rolly! Hold the beast back! Brother Hua! Little Yan! Rong Ruo! Bring out your ring spirits!” Qiao Chu jumped off Rolly’s back and bit down hard on the tip of his thumb. Blood flowed out from his thumb and he pressed it between his brows as he smeared the blood right between his eyes. A purple light flared out from his body the next moment!

A purple spirit!

Everyone else who had their eyes on the battlefield were all suddenly startled!

The purple spirit which had not been seen in the past century appeared right before their eyes at that moment! On top of that, it was a youth looking to be just sixteen or seventeen years old!

However, before any of them could recover from the shock.....

Three more blindingly glaring purple glows erupted in tandem! The other three youths who had appeared with the first one were all glowing with a blinding purple light emanating from their spiritual powers!

Four purple spirit users!

And they were all still so young!

All of it was just too unbelievable!

The immense double headed bone snake appeared in a torrential

rush! Following right after, a silvery white Hell Butterfly fluttered in the air and a gigantic ape gave out a ear splitting roar!

All their eyes were fixed on the Guardian grade Spirit Beast!

Bolts of light lit up the area as they were shot out in succession, and the blasts resonated as they exploded in the air!

The mammoth sized Guardian grade Spirit Beast suddenly found itself under a concentrated and coordinated attack and it let out another earth shattering roar!

Ye Sha leapt into the midst of the fray and shot out several rays aimed directly at the eyes of the Guardian grade Spirit Beast which exploded in quick succession on the Spirit Beast!

Jun Wu Xie and the black beast swerved and dodged, twisted and turned under the feet of the Spirit Beast, the black beast using its lightning quick reflexes to halt the advancing steps of the Guardian grade Spirit Beast!

Countless Hell Butterflies circled the Spirit Beast as they fluttered their wings endlessly. Bits of pollen that numbed and paralysed the nerves fell from those uncountable fluttering light wings as Rolly and the great ape rushed the Spirit Beast from the front. The two massive sized ring spirit who possessed overwhelming strength let out deafening roars as they dug in their hind limbs and pushed back at the front legs of the Spirit Beast, stopping it from advancing a single step more!

The double headed bone snake slid and slithered, as its sturdy bone frame tangled with the Spirit Beast's nine powerful tails!

Qiao Chu, Hua Yao, Fei Yan and Rong Ruo fired their spiritual energies bolts endlessly, all concentrated upon the Spirit Beast and the incessant explosions rocked the trees all around with its impact!

The battlefield was lit in a bright purple light as the spiritual power bolts continued to rain upon the Spirit Beast!

In a blink, the Guardian grade Spirit Beast that had driven everyone into despair was suddenly stopped in its tracks by the combined and well coordinated attacks of Jun Wu Xie and her teammates!

Long Qi and his men who had managed to gain a short breather suddenly all stood up, as they stared transfixed at the scene before their eyes, at a loss for words!

“General Long, who are all these people? Why would they help our Young Miss to resist against the Spirit Beast?” All the Rui Lin Army soldiers were stunned. They had just experienced first hand the overwhelming might and terror of the Guardian grade Spirit Beast and they wouldn’t believe what they were seeing if they did not witness it themselves.

Sixteen or seventeen year old purple spirit users?

Ring spirits that were so powerful they could not tell their grades?

And the overwhelmingly powerful Spirit Beast that was being held down! ?

Everything was just like a dream. It made all the men feel they had walked into an illusionary realm.

Long Qi’s heart was beating furiously and his breaths were coming in short gasps. He turned suddenly and picked up all the medicine bottles that Jun Wu Xie had thrown to them and moved as quickly as he could to distribute them among his men.

“Heal yourselves now! Our Young Miss is currently risking her life to save us! We cannot afford to dawdle here in inaction!” Long Qi shouted to his men!

Huddled on one side, Rong Heng and the other Cloud Treading Peak disciples were holding each other tightly as terror overtook them. At the sound of Long Qi’s shout, they recovered enough to scramble over to help the Rui Lin Army soldiers with the medicine.

Chapter 493: “Consecutive Slaps – Third Form (4)”

Among the myriad bottles of medicines, there were salves for external use and elixirs to be ingested orally. Rong Heng and his fellow disciples moved hurriedly to dispense and apply the various medicines for the Rui Lin Army soldiers under Long Qi’s orders with their hearts palpitating crazily in fear.

Rong Heng had not uttered a single sound but the undisguised terror that filled his eyes had not left his eyes for a single moment.

The other two Cloud Treading Peak disciples might not have noticed but he had seen it very clearly. Wasn’t the youth that was riding on the back of that black beast the very same Jun Xie who was in the Qing Yun Clan then?

On the day that the Qing Yun Clan was obliterated, Mu Chen had led all the disciples from the Cloud Treading Peak off the mountain. Rong Heng and his fellow disciples had the deepest respect and utmost trust for Mu Chen and they did not question the sudden decision, not even once. They only knew on that day, something terrible had happened in the Cloudy Peaks, and except for the Cloud Treading Peak, all the disciples from the other peaks were all killed!

Rong Heng had searched all over the place for Jun Xie then, fearing deeply for the safety of that warm hearted but cold faced boy, who had produced medicine just for his condition. Fortunately, he had not been able to locate Jun Xie’s body within the Cloudy Peaks. But neither had he seen Jun Xie and he could only pray fervently in his heart that the boy had left the Cloudy Peaks, a place where hidden and untold dangers laid.

Nevertheless, Rong Heng would never have imagined that he would see Jun Xie once again in the Battle Spirits Forest!

What shocked him even more was that Long Qi and the other men from the Rui Lin Army had unhesitatingly knelt before Jun Xie and he knew he had clearly heard them address Jun Xie as..... Young Miss.....

He was sure..... It was Young Miss.....

Having followed Mu Chen to temporarily serve under the Lin Palace, Rong Heng had naturally known that the Rui Lin Army only took orders from people who shared the same blood with the Jun Family. Jun Xian, Jun Qing, and one other who had still not appeared before them, their Young Miss, Jun Wu Xie.

And Long Qi and his men had just addressed Jun Xie as Young Miss.....

Jun Xie..... Jun Wu Xie.....

Could they be..... The one and the same?

Countless questions and shocking revelations swirled in Rong Heng's mind but he realised that now wasn't the best time to ask questions.

The Guardian grade Spirit Beast was right before them and he needed help the men from the Rui Lin Army recover every single bit of power in the shortest time possible.

However, just as Rong Heng was recovering from his shock and he noticed the bottles of medicine in his hands, his heart was in for another traumatic shock!

As a disciple of the Qing Yun Clan, he possessed quite a bit of knowledge in medicine. He had only given all the medicines a quick sweeping glance and he was able to identify that the all the bottles Jun Xie had carelessly thrown to the soldiers were without exception, all exceptionally rare and precious!

The gashes so deep that the bone was exposed, and when the cooling salve was applied on the wound, it immediately stopped the bleeding and closed the wound. The soldiers who had been

vomiting blood suddenly found the blood stop surging up their throats after they swallowed the lightly fragrant elixirs!

What were all these medicines made from?

Its effects completely overshadowed and was more amazing than any medicine he had ever seen in the Qing Yun Clan!

He applied and fed the medicines to Long Qi and his men as was required as he forcibly suppressed the shock in his heart. Rong Heng found his head whirling as everything that was happening before his eyes was just so unbelievable.

Everything single thing about it rendered him speechless.

And, as for the people who found themselves speechlessly amazed, was not just limited to Rong Heng alone.

Hidden in the shadows, the youths had been patiently waiting for the battle to over before they could loot the bodies. And the shock that rocked their minds from what they were seeing at that moment shook them to their very cores!

Initially, as she had watched Long Qi and his men gradually losing ground in the battle, and seeing their lifeblood flow out from their bodies, the smile on Ning Xin's face had widened and her expression was one of arrogance. But just as she was thinking that Long Qi and his men would finally lose their lives for their disrespectful and spurious treatment of her, two dark figures had suddenly appeared, and shattered Ning Xin's dream to pieces!

And the smile on her face immediately froze and the expression on her face gradually turned into one of utter disbelief and shock!

Long Qi and his men were actually rescued!!

Chapter 494: “Consecutive Slaps – Third Form (5)”

If they had not seen it with their own eyes, none of them would have believed that anyone had the ability to save someone under attack by a Guardian grade Spirit Beast.

And that was exactly what happened right before the eyes of Ning Xin and her team!

When those two black shadows had appeared, Ning Xin and her team had not expected things to turn out this way.

The black beast had plucked the soldiers of the Rui Lin Army out from the battle in quick succession and the same highly arrogant man who had so coldly spurned Ning Xin and Lu Wei Jie had unhesitatingly knelt before a figure they had not been able to see!

That scene was what caused Ning Xin to stare in wide eyed disbelief!

When she managed to get a clear look at the face of the person, she had been so greatly shocked she stood dumbfounded for a long while!

That tiny figure she was seeing, wasn't that Jun Xie, whom she had used to disgrace and suppress Fan Jin's overly shining reputation!?

“Why is it him.....” Ning Xin could not believe her eyes. And what happened after made Ning Xin's face pale immediately and she suddenly felt weak!

After Jun Xie snatched Long Qi and his men from the jaws of death, he rushed back at the Guardian grade Spirit Beast. Just as Ning Xin was still smiling in glee at Jun Xie having overestimated himself, more figures suddenly jumped into the fray one after another!

The successive streaks of purple light made her dizzy, and powerful ring spirits she had never seen almost made her eyes pop out in shock!

“Impossible..... It’s not possible.....” Ning Xin stared spellbound as the Guardian grade Spirit Beast’s attack was held back by the skillfully executed and well coordinated attacks of Jun Xie and his teammates. She turned suddenly to stare at Yin Yan, who was staring mesmerised, and she screamed:

“Didn’t you tell me Jun Xie’s ring spirit was just an ordinary little black cat? So, what’s with the massive black beast I am seeing here!? And where did those purple spirit users pop out from!?”

Yin Yan was just as horrified by what he was seeing with his eyes. Hearing Ning Xin’s screaming voice, he recovered a little and he shivered as he felt a chill run up his spine before he stammered haltingly: “I..... I don’t know..... I really saw it..... His ring spirit was..... was just a black cat..... That..... that black beast..... I’ve never..... seen it before..... Those..... those purple spirit users..... purple spirits..... I really..... do not know.....”

Yin Yan felt like crying. How was he expected to explain how Jun Xie had so suddenly undergone such a heaven defying change?

And more terrifyingly, he had four purple spirit exponents with him!

Four purple spirits! What kind of an abomination was that!?

They had not seen the birth of a purple spirit for a century and even if there was one, in all instances, it would have been a hermit who had shut himself off from the world and be like a hundred years old! It was not possible for young youths in their teens!

But no matter how unbelievable that was, the fact was right before their eyes and the undeniable truth of the matter wrecked at their sensibilities.

All of what they were seeing, was really happening!

“Damn!” Ning Xin was chewing on her nails in anxiety and the inevitable feeling of doom. She could not blame Yin Yan entirely for it. Those other people whom she had sent to snoop on Jun Xie had come back with the same conclusions.

But from what they were seeing here in the Battle Spirits Forest, all the intelligence that they had gathered about Jun Xie, nothing could be further from the truth!

That seemingly inconspicuous pint sized brat was way more complicated than what all of them could ever imagine.

The massive and powerful black beast always by his side notwithstanding, just the four purple spirit exponents before them would be able to cause unimaginable upheaval throughout the lands under the heavens!

Ning Xin’s mind was whirling as countless thoughts raced through it. She tried her hardest to recall if she had gone against Jun Xie face to face in the Zephyr Academy. After seeing Jun Xie’s true might and prowess in battle, she wouldn’t have dared to even cast her shadow on Jun Xie no matter what she was offered.

She heaved a sigh of relief when she realised that she had always used Yin Yan to instigate Li Zi Mu to carry out those deeds, and she had never appeared before Jun Xie herself.

There’s still a chance, a chance to win him over!

Chapter 495: “Consecutive Slaps – Third Form (6)”

Ning Xin had just heaved a sigh of relief when Yin Yan who was beside her suddenly gave out a high pitched scream.

“Shut up!” Ning Xin said with a cold stare but Yin Yan was pointing forward with his hand raised and his face pale. Ning Xin turned to look in the direction Yin Yan was pointing and what she saw made her feel as though a bolt of lightning had suddenly struck her and she stood there completely dumbstruck.

Another tall figure had just appeared beside Long Qi and the others!

“Fan Jin! It’s Fan Jin..... He is still alive.....” Yin Yan could not help it as his body trembled visibly. He suddenly grabbed at Ning Xin’s shoulders and said fearfully: “Senior Ning, Fan Jin is still alive! And Jun Xie was in the same team as him!”

Those words caused Ning Xin’s mind to explode in a big blast!

That’s right! How could she had missed the possibility that Fan Jin could still have been with Jun Xie all this while! She had mindlessly taken other possibilities for granted when she had received the news that Fan Jin had fallen into the trap she had set!

Fan Jin was still very much alive! That would mean that her plan had failed utterly. Fan Jin had arrived just after Jun Xie and the others and that was telling her that they had been together all this time.....

That would mean that her whole scheme had been irrecoverably exposed!

Ning Xin who had still fully intended to win Jun Xie over to her side suddenly paled as all colour drained from her face.

Although she had fully delegated everything to Yin Yan for all

the arrangements to be made for the scheme she had plotted to be carried out in the Battle Spirits Forest, the target that they wanted to kill was nevertheless the adopted son of the Headmaster and the target's prominence had inadvertently caused the disciples roped into the scheme to feel a certain unease. And to counter that, Ning Xin had allowed Yin Yan to hint that her father would grant them certain favours and advantages after the deed is done.

That plan had been foolproof and Ning Xin had never expected that she would fail.

But Fan Jin had suddenly appeared here alive and well!

Exceptionally powerful ring spirits, four purple spirit exponents!

When those realisations came crashing into Ning Xin's mind, the strength in her legs seeped out from her.

It's over, it's really over this time.....

She wasn't worried that Fan Jin would exact his revenge on her after finding out the truth, but she did not dare to imagine how she would even begin to stand up to Jun Xie's terrifying wrath!

"Let's go! We need to return immediately!" Ning Xin leaned heavily on the tree trunk, struggling to hold herself up. She could not afford to wait till Jun Xie and his team had taken down the Guardian grade Spirit Beast before she made her escape! If they were to wait till then, she wouldn't be able to leave this place alive.

"What! ?" Yin Yan could not believe what he heard.

Ning Xin raised a hand and slapped Yin Yan hard across the face before she screamed: "Are you an idiot! ? If we do not leave now, you want to wait till they defeat the Guardian grade Spirit Beast and free up their hands to come kill us! ? Fan Jin is still alive and our scheme is all exposed! Even if Fan Jin does nothing in retaliation, what about Jun Xie! ? Can you see it!? He has obviously broken through to the yellow spirit!! Can't you see how immensely powerful his ring spirit is!? Even if the purple spirit exponents

with her do not raise a finger against us, just Jun Xie alone would be more than enough to claim both our lives!”

Yin Yan snapped back to his senses and held his hand to his burning cheek, staring helplessly at the raging and greatly flustered Ning Xin.

“We leave now! Back to the Zephyr Academy! My father is there and even if Jun Xie was to seek revenge against me, my father’s men would still be able to stop him. If we stay here any longer, we would not see anything other than our doom.” Ning Xin’s face was now a deathly pallor. Never in her wildest dreams, would she expect that a pawn she had used to attack Fan Jin with, would one day turn out to be such a ferocious beast that could threaten her life so.

“Yes..... Yes.....” Yin Yan nodded quickly as his body continued to tremble.

The two of them supported each other as they stumbled along through the dense forest to make their escape. Lu Wei Jie and the rest of the team who had been waiting all this time suddenly saw Ning Xin and the others return with extremely pale and flustered faces.

Chapter 496: “Consecutive Slaps – Third Form (7)”

“Ning Xin, what happened to all of you?” Lu Wei Jie went forward towards them, his face filled with concern, but he was pushed away by Ning Xin impatiently.

“I want to go back!” Ning Xin exclaimed determinedly and ignored all of Lu Wei Jie’s anxious and worried questions, dragging Yin Yan behind her as she strode off.

Lu Wei Jie and the other disciples were all confused and perplexed, not knowing what was actually happening.

A few youths among them were saying: “What’s wrong with Senior Ning? The Spirit Hunt is not over yet, why is she in such a hurry to leave? Didn’t she tell us to wait here for those men to be killed and we’ll go loot the their bodies?”

One of the corners of Lu Wei Jie’s mouth twitched. He felt rather insulted that Ning Xin had pushed him aside without any consideration for his feelings.

“Let her leave if she wants to. We’ll continue to wait here.” Lu Wei Jie murmured softly, in obvious dissatisfaction.

On the other side of the trees, the Guardian grade Spirit Beast was being attacked by Jun Wu Xie and her teammates.

It possessed an extremely thick hide and its thick fur and hide blocked most of the attacks but it was not able to ward off all the concentrated attacks from all directions. Its explosive rage was slowly being replaced by the tiredness brought by the pain inflicted upon it. When it finally decided that it was getting too troublesome for its taste, the Guardian grade Spirit Beast suddenly turned around and ran off in the opposite direction of where Long Qi and his men were standing.....

The Guardian grade Spirit Beast’s sudden “escape” surprised

Qiao Chu and the others who had been prepared to lay down their lives in this battle. They stared in wide eyed surprise as the Spirit Beast suddenly turned tail and whizzed off into the trees, the purple light from their spiritual powers still glowing brightly in their palms.

“Why did it suddenly run.....” Qiao Chu scratched his head, unable to understand the Guardian grade Spirit Beast’s logic.

“A Guardian grade Spirit Beast possesses a certain level of intelligence and they will not carry out a fight to the death with its opponent. Unless there was no other way out, Spirit Beasts of such a level would size up the situation and take an alternative course.” The last one to join into the fray, Fan Jin explained as he panted heavily. However, his eyes were still staring incredulous at Qiao Chu and the others as the purple light from their spiritual powers continued to glow, his mind still unable to fully accept what he was seeing.

How could he accept the fact that he had been living the past few days with four unbelievable purple spirit exponents right beside him! ?

They are legendary purple spirit exponents, the pinnacle of power!

The Guardian grade Spirit Beast’s sudden retreat made Jun Wu Xie wary and her senses were still all heightened as she warned: “Beware.”

Ye Sha shimmered and disappeared right before their eyes.

Jun Wu Xie rode upon the black beast’s back and came to where Long Qi and his men were gathered.

Long Qi and the soldiers saw Jun Wu Xie approaching and they knelt on one knee immediately. Their wounds had mainly been treated and taken care of. They were almost going to join in the battle when the fight suddenly ended.

Rong Heng and his two other fellow disciples stood respectfully on one side. Afterall, they had a very good idea of the identity of the youth before them.

Jun Wu Xie ignored the kneeling soldiers and walked right past them to come stand beside the soldier whose arm was almost fully cut off. She jumped off the back of the black beast and squatted down beside the man to check the wound.

The soldier immediately attempted to straighten his tired and limp body when he saw Jun Wu Xie approach and struggled to get up.

“Your subordinate greets Young Miss. I beg your forgiveness for my tardiness in paying my respects!”

‘Clunk!’ A clatter sounded.

The sword in Fan Jin’s hand dropped to the ground beside him.

Qiao Chu and Fei Yan stood frozen. Their mouths were wide open. Their eyes did not blink. They stood still as statues in their spots. Their minds were suddenly blank as they stared at the calm and composed Jun Xie.

“Y..... Young..... Young Miss..... O..... of the..... The..... Rui Lin Army..... The..... Young Miss.....” Fan Jin’s mind swam with those words as they repeated themselves over and over endlessly. His mind was not able to function at that moment.

‘Jun Xie’s a girl! ?’

‘Jun Xie is a GIRL! !’

‘She is the Young Miss of the RUI LIN ARMY! ! ?’

‘Lin Palace..... Jun Family..... Jun Xie.....’

Fan Jin’s body trembled involuntarily at the BIG revelation that had just exploded in his mind!

Chapter 497: “Consecutive Slaps – Third Form (8)”

Qiao Chu and Fei Yan reacted in the exact same way and even Hua Yao's and Rong Ruo's faces were filled with shock.

These two had always had a naggy and sneaking suspicion that Jun Xie was a girl over the time they had spent together.

But not for a single moment would they ever have imagined that she would be the Young Miss of the most ferocious strike force across the lands!

“Little Xie..... you are their..... erm.....” Qiao Chu raised a hand, and pointed a finger which was shaking so badly as he turned it towards Long Qi and his men, his eyes clearly still not fully focused.

Jun Wu Xie shot Qiao Chu a glance but did not give him a reaction. She did not understand why Qiao Chu and the others were acting so shocked.

Did her real identity matter that much?

To Jun Wu Xie, she did not care about a person's status or background. What concerned her was getting to know the person as an individual and that's all that mattered.

So, she had naturally assumed that everyone else thought the same way.

It's not that complicated!

“I am deeply grateful for the assistance rendered to us. Allow my humble self to extend my thanks as the general of the Rui Lin Army, Long Qi.” Long Qi stood up at that moment, his tall frame towering over the youths before him.

Qiao Chu shook his head and waved his hands in a hurry.

“Don’t think anything about it. It was your..... Y..... Young Miss who brought us to you. It’s little wonder now when I was thinking earlier why she would rush in without a thought, to come here once she heard that someone was trying to con several men from the Rui Lin Army. So, it’s because they were family.....” Qiao Chu said, but the last sentence was said in a barely audible whisper.

Long Qi nodded slightly in acknowledgement, striking a debonair figure.

“Do you need help?” Rong Heng, who had been standing quietly on one side tried to get closer to Jun Wu Xie. And the closer he got to her, the more certain he was that the youth before him was the same Jun Xie that had been at the Qing Yun Clan.

Jun Wu Xie nodded. “Lift his arm up, and push the wound together.”

Rong Heng did as he was told.

The soldier who was being treated was feeling rather overwhelmed by the Young Miss treating his wound personally and his pale and colourless face was suddenly flushed pink. He tried his best to straighten his back and for his face to remain composed, attempting to not look as wretched as he felt.

The arm was cut cleanly and the neater the cut, the easier it was for her to reattach the limb.

“That Spirit Beast’s skill with its blades isn’t too shabby.” Those words suddenly just came out of Jun Wu Xie’s mouth.

The pink glow on the soldier’s face faded.

All the others around looked at Jun Wu Xie, speechless, not knowing how to reply to that.

Did she know what she just said?

After she had dealt with the soldier’s wounds, Jun Wu Xie raised her hands, and wiped her two blood filled tiny hands clean on the

soldier's clothes. After her hands were cleaned, she finally stood up satisfied.

The expressions on the faces of all the people there cannot be described as merely shocked at that moment.....

Ye Sha returned at that moment and based on his observations, that Guardian grade Spirit Beast would not be returning to resume their battle. The Spirit Beast had gone off in a westerly direction and had not turned its head back once.

With that report, Long Qi finally relaxed his tensed up nerves.

“Find me the location of Ning Xin and her group.” Jun Wu Xie commanded Ye Sha, her eyes narrowed dangerously.

She had initially relented and agreed to Fan Jin's request to spare Ning Xin and Yin Yan just that once. But they had insisted on seeking their own deaths and laid their scheming claws on the Rui Lin Army's men.

Since they refused to take the easy broad avenues of the Heavens, she might as well send them down into the fiery dark depths of Hell.

The command of the Rui Lin Army had already been given to her and these men were hers to protect.

Ning Xin had dared lay her hands on her men, and she shall pay for it with her life!

Jun Wu Xie's words sent a chill up Fan Jin's entire body and he had wanted to say something till he saw the blood soaked clothes on Long Qi and his men. That sight shut him up properly, well and good.

If Jun Wu and Xie and the others had not made it here in time, what they would be seeing here now would be several lifeless bodies!

The men of the Rui Lin Army were well respected everywhere.

And Jun Wu Xie was the Young Miss of the Lin Palace itself. If she intended to seek revenge for the harm inflicted to her men, Fan Jin would not be able to find any reason to even plead against it.

Chapter 498: “Consecutive Slaps – Homesickness (1)”

After waiting for a while, Ye Sha returned. And the news he brought back made Jun Wu Xie’s brow furrow.

No one knew the reason why Ning Xin and Yin Yan had suddenly decided to withdraw themselves from the Spirit Hunt. The two of them had hurried their way out and released their distress signal flare. When Ye Sha got to where the two of them were, they had already been retrieved by the teachers that had hurried over to escort them out.

“They have escaped rather quickly.” Jun Wu Xie said chillingly.

“As the saying goes, even if the monk escapes, the monastery remains in place. They will still have to come back to the Zephyr Academy in any case, isn’t that right?” Hua Yao said, his face a sea of calm.

Jun Wu Xie smiled, a little coldly. “They have nowhere else to run.”

Those two had might have been lucky and bought themselves some time by withdrawing and leaving the Battle Spirits Forest suddenly. But when the Spirit Hunt ends and all the disciples return to the Zephyr Academy, would Ning Xin and Yin Yan still be able to hide? She had no intentions of letting those two off so easily. Since they dared scheme against the Rui Lin Army, they must be prepared to accept the consequences.

“Do we carry on with the Spirit Hunt or do we go back as well?” Qiao Chu was feeling rather eager and edgy. Following Jun Wu Xie always provided him with unparalleled thrills and endless excitement.

First, it had been the Qing Yun Clan, then it had been to fight a Guardian grade Spirit Beast. He was really filled with anticipation

to see what other earth shaking things Jun Wu Xie would be able to come up with after this.

“Continue. We’ll deal with them when we get back.” Jun Wu Xie was in no rush. It was a good thing that Ning Xin had escaped today. If she had gotten herself caught in the Battle Spirits Forest today and she was forced to just kill her easily, wouldn’t that make things too dull and boring?

Since Ning Xin chose to escape, she must realise that the clock had started ticking.

When they get back to the Zephyr Academy, she would make Ning Xin fully regret ever having made her escape today, as she would have died a much cleaner and less painful death here in the Battle Spirits Forest if she had stayed to answer for her folly!

“If that’s the case, why don’t we just stay around here and hunt down some prey.” Qiao Chu rubbed his fists and cracked his knuckles, preparing himself to haul in a big one. If they could even resist against a Guardian grade Spirit Beast, any other Spirit Beasts would not even pose a challenge to him.

Jun Wu Xie turned to Long Qi and his men and asked: “What are all of you doing here?”

When she was still at the Lin Palace, she had not heard that the Rui Lin Army had any intentions of coming into the Battle Spirits Forest.

“Reporting to Young Miss, the reason your subordinate came here is to locate the Aqua Spirit Grass.” Long Qi answered respectfully.

“Aqua Spirit Grass?” Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow and she glanced at Rong Heng and his fellow disciples. “It seems that Mu Chen has found a way to further develop the veins and arteries for all of you.”

“Yes. Exactly.”

Rong Heng stared at Jun Wu Xie with shock in his eyes. Jun Wu Xie had only heard Long Qi mention Aqua Spirit Grass and she knew exactly what Mu Chen wanted to do with it. Her exceptional knowledge of herbs really astounded him greatly.

“I’ll come too.” Jun Wu Xie had previously toyed with the idea of using Aqua Spirit Grass. But she had been in the Lin Palace then and she did not have adequate herbs for her research. When she went to the Qing Yun Clan, she found quite a bit of Aqua Spirit Grass in the Hidden Cloud Peak and she had cultivated some elixirs from them.

If they had Aqua Spirit Grass here, it would not hurt if she could stock up a little on it.

When Jun Wu Xie obliterated the Qing Yun Clan, her biggest regret was that she had not been able to bring all those rare and precious herbs in the Hidden Cloud Peak back with her. And after hearing Long Qi’s report on the current situation in the Lin Palace, she was able to conclude that Mu Chen had brought the whole stock of all the herbs in the Hidden Cloud Peak with him to the Lin Palace, and had generously splurged and indulged the Rui Lin Army’s soldiers with them, and that made her feel decidedly better.

When she had lured Mu Chen to go to the Lin Palace, Jun Wu Xie had not thought that he would give it his all. She had thought that Mu Chen had some understanding on the intricacies of veins and arteries and he would be able to help enhance and develop the Rui Lin Army’s condition while she was not around. But from what Long Qi was telling her, Mu Chen had not only kept his promise and gone to the Lin Palace, but had given everything he had to develop suitable medicine tailored to the Rui Lin Army’s specific needs. That had pleasantly been out of Jun Wu Xie’s expectations.

Chapter 499: “Homesickness (2)”

“Master Mu is extremely concerned for our bodies’ condition and the Duke has approved for him to deploy up to ten members of the Rui Lin Army any way he deems fit to assist him in developing elixirs for us.” Long Qi’s tone was calm, but it was not hard to see that he held great respect for Mu Chen.

Jun Wu Xie’s eyebrow raised suddenly.

The Rui Lin Army was Jun Xian’s pride and joy. Every single soldier was highly prized. Even the original owner of her body had not been allowed to move a single soldier in the Rui Lin Army which showed just how much Jun Xian did not allow just anyone to give orders to his prized army. And by allowing Mu Chen to freely deploy up to ten soldiers in the Rui Lin Army, it told of the trust Jun Xian had for Mu Chen.

Based on Jun Xian’s reaction, Jun Wu Xie knew that Mu Chen had been really sincere in keeping his promise to Jun Wu Xie in the Cloudy Peaks.

Mu Chen was indeed a man of his words.

“Grandfather and Uncle..... How are they?” The one question that had been suppressed in her heart, and one that she had hesitated so long to ask. Jun Wu Xie had been silent a long while before she could not help herself but to ask.

She had never experienced nor known about what homesickness was, and it was only after she had left the Lin Palace that gave her her first taste of it.

She missed Jun Xian’s kind and benevolent smile, missed Jun Qing’s jovial laughter. Even when she tried not to go think about it, it would still always surface in her mind.

Long Qi looked at Jun Wu Xie, his eyes suddenly softening. A faint smile appeared on his lips but he lowered his head to hide it.

“The Duke and His Highness are fine. Except that they both..... miss you a lot.”

She could suddenly hear her heartbeat clearly.

Jun Wu Xie lowered her eyes, to wipe away the disappointment filling up in her eyes.

She missed Grandfather and Uncle a lot too..... But she couldn't go back yet.

She was afraid. Afraid that if she went back, she would become greedy for the warmth brought by her family, and soften her heart and will.

The bitter lesson with the Qing Yun Clan had taught her that even if she did not go out to provoke anybody, others would target and hunt her down as she possessed the rare Snow Lotus.

Although the Water of Heaven's Spring in the Heaven's Flask allowed her to hide the Snow Lotus' presence and others would not be able to find it, she did not want to live her life like a fugitive, hiding and living without purpose.

As long as the Snow Lotus remained to be her ring spirit, and as long as she still lived in this world, danger could be hiding just around the next corner anytime. She was currently still too weak and vulnerable and was not able to take on the Twelve Palaces. If any of the Twelve Palaces were to find out about her real identity, she would not be the only one, but the whole Jun Family and the Rui Lin Army would surely be implicated.

The might of the Middle Realm was something Jun Wu Xie had seen and experienced herself. That overwhelming and unbelievable strength was enough to drive people to despair and was able to smash everything she held dear to her heart in a blink.

Her home, her family.

She must not go back!

No matter how much she missed home, she could not return. At the moment she realised that she must stay, Jun Wu Xie decided that she would accompany Qiao Chu and the others to find the Dark Emperor's tomb, to gain the treasures and inherit its strength and power, to fully eradicate all the enemies who were eyeing the Snow Lotus!

She wanted to become stronger, strong enough to make people not dare to covet any of her possessions, strong enough to prevent anyone from hurting a single hair on the people she dearly loved.

That was Jun Wu Xie's resolution. She would use the longing she had to see Jun Xian, the longing she had to see Jun Qing, and turn it into endless motivation for her to seek strength.

Only after she had erased all the threats in this world, would she be able to return to the Lin Palace without worry. To return to her most cherished home, as she did not want to bring any of the dangers following her anywhere close to her family.

"Young Miss, are you..... really not going to return?" Long Qi saw Jun Wu Xie lower her eyes, and he suddenly felt his heart wince.

The Lin Palace without Jun Wu Xie, had suddenly felt to be greatly lacking, and everyone in there, still felt a great sense of loss.

Chapter 500: “Homesickness (3)”

The Duke and His Highness might not have shown their grief, but Long Qi who knew the two men from the Jun Family very well knew that they missed Jun Wu Xie terribly.

“Not for now.” Jun Wu Xie shook her head.

Long Qi opened his mouth as if to say something but decided to remain silent in the end.

Qiao Chu, Hua Yao and the rest looked at Jun Wu Xie silently, theirs hearts going out for Jun Wu Xie.

Long Qi and his men did not know the reason why Jun Wu Xie was refusing to return home.

But Jun Wu Xie’s comrades knew the reason very well. It was because of the Snow Lotus within her. She could be found out by the Twelve Palaces anytime and once that happened, the nightmare would begin.

The rarity of a plant type ring spirit was reason enough to alarm the monstrous entities from the Twelve Palaces. And once they moved to descend onto the Lower Realm to seize it, Jun Wu Xie would not stand a chance to be able to live through it, even with the protection of the powerful Rui Lin Army. The Twelve Palaces would completely exterminate Jun Wu Xie, her family members, and the whole Rui Lin Army.

Having personally experienced the merciless cruelty of the Twelve Palaces, Qiao Chu and the others did not believe for a moment that the Twelve Palaces would show any mercy.

Jun Wu Xie’s choice, was made with an intention to protect the Lin Palace and the Rui Lin Army from harm.

“Alright, we should start moving. Aren’t we supposed to look for Aqua Spirit Grass? Let’s hurry before that fumbling Spirit Beast decides to come back here.” Qiao Chu could not bear to see Jun Wu

Xie's sad eyes any longer and he bolstered himself and tried to disperse the gloomy atmosphere with a laugh.

"Let's go." Long Qi realised that the words he had said might bring some measure of discomfort to Jun Wu Xie and he agreed to Qiao Chu's suggestions quickly.

Everyone in that convoy seems to have come to an unspoken consensus and no one spoke another word about it as they made their way towards the Spirit Moon Lake. The wounded soldiers were all feeling much better after receiving treatment except for the soldiers who had gotten his arm reattached, who needed his comrades to help him as they moved out.

With Qiao Chu frivolous and funny antics lightening up the mood, the journey was filled with smiles and sounds of laughter. Fei Yan joined in and formed a duet with Qiao Chu which warmed the hearts of everybody.

Jun Wu Xie carried the little black cat who had shrunk its form and walked in the middle of the group. The pangs of longing still tugged at her heart, a feeling still unfamiliar to her, and allowing Jun Wu Xie to experience clearly, what longing felt like.

Would Grandfather and Uncle be angry with her for not bidding goodbye?

"We will definitely find the Dark Emperor's tomb." Hua Yao had suddenly appeared beside Jun Wu Xie unnoticed and said in a whisper that only the two of them could hear.

Jun Wu Xie raised her head, her calm eyes showing a slight tinge of surprise.

Hua Yao's handsome features broke into a genuine and heartfelt smile. He looked at Jun Wu Xie and rubbed on Jun Wu Xie's head a little before he said: "After we all become strong, shall we all go back together with you?"

Jun Wu Xie appeared to be surprised. The dull ache in her chest

seemed to be getting slowly displaced by a soft spreading warmth. The ache was gradually fading and replaced by a feeling that was both sour and numbing.

“What? Are we not welcome?” Hua Yao cracked a rare joke, taking a gentle swipe at Jun Wu Xie, the tear shaped mole at the edge of his eye making his face look more alluring as he smiled.

“Not that.” Jun Wu Xie shook her head, the cold expression on her face cracking a little as the faintest of smiles curled her lips ever so slightly. “Grandfather and Uncle would like all of you.”

“I’ll assume that’s a deal.” Hua Yao heaved a sigh of relief. Jun Wu Xie was always so independent and strong willed but they had seen today that that stone cold heart had a soft side to it as well. She was still human and that revelation made the companions begin to want to show tenderness and concern for their little devilish companion.

Chapter 501: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form (1)"

She was still a young little girl after all wasn't she? As her "older siblings", they would not allow their "little sister" to feel so dejected.

"After we retrieve the Aqua Spirit Grass, why don't we get Qiao Chu to summon Rolly out to give you a great big hug?" Hua Yao suggested, playing on Jun Wu Xie's big "weakness".

Just as expected, the mere mention of Rolly's name made Jun Wu Xie's eyes light up. She lifted her head and nodded firmly agreeing to Hua Yao's suggestion happily!

Hua Yao was speechless as he led Jun Wu Xie to join up with the rest of the group.

The group moved, with sounds of boisterous laughter frequently erupting. But someone was intent on coming in to spoil the party, to throw a wet blanket on that celebratory and happy mood.

Lu Wei Jie and his team had remained at the spot after Ning Xin had left, waiting for the windfall that he expected to fall into his lap. He waited for awhile longer after the roars from the Spirit Beast had died down before he gathered up his courage to move out towards the spot they had led the Spirit Beast to attack the men from the Rui Lin Army. But he suddenly found himself faced with Jun Wu Xie and her group when he arrived at the Spirit Moon Lake!

"Senior Lu, it's them!" A sharp eyed disciple saw with one glance that the group was Long Qi and his men. With that single glance, the disciple also caught sight of Fan Jin and a few other disciples wearing the Zephyr Academy's uniform!

Lu Wei Jie froze. He had not expected that Long Qi and his men would come out of that battle alive. Having faced off with a

Guardian grade Spirit Beast, the only result could only be inevitable doom!

Long Qi and his men might have sustained injuries, but the wounds did not look to be too serious, and they looked to be in good spirits.

That was a scene that Lu Wei Jie would never expect himself to see.

“Damned wretches! You still dare to show your face before us! ?” The tempers of the Rui Lin Army soldiers that had almost lost their lives to the Guardian grade Spirit Beast flared when they spotted the scoundrels who had led the Spirit Beast onto them. If they had not fallen prey to their insidious scheme, they would not have fallen to such a wretched state now!

That angry shout turned Lu Wei Jie’s blood to ice immediately. Long Qi and his men were still alive and their ploy to get them killed by the Guardian grade Spirit Beast would be made known to everyone! What was he supposed to do next?

“Run!” Lu Wei Jie did not dare to remain at his spot a moment longer. It suddenly dawned on him why Ning Xin and Yin Yan had withdrawn from the Spirit Hunt so suddenly. It had not been by accident and they must have found out that Long Qi and his men had survived and escaped by announcing their withdrawal!

Long Qi’s skills and power were way above theirs and his men were no meek mice either. When the Rui Lin Army come after them to settle scores, it would only spell the end for all of them!

When those thoughts came into his mind, Lu Wei Jie cursed colourfully at Ning Xin and Yin Yan who had safely escaped on their own. They had obviously known that Long Qi and his men had survived but they had not told them a single word about it and allowed them to think they could still gain the loot easily. They had remained there to wait senselessly and were now caught red handed by Long Qi and his men!

Lu Wei Jie picked up his legs and ran mindlessly. All his teammates followed, running for their lives.

Long Qi's eyes narrowed dangerously. As the head of an army of battle hardened men, he had allowed himself to be tricked by these young youths and he felt deeply ashamed of having led his men into such danger.

“Run? Not so easy!” Long Qi shouted and the five other Rui Lin Army soldiers who had sustained lighter injuries split immediately as they moved without a word. The years spent on the battlefield, wading through hordes of enemies gave the men speed and determination that the young disciples of the Zephyr Academy could not hope to match. Even with the wounds on their tired bodies, the men easily caught up with the youths!

The youths were running in all directions and they were picked up and caught one by one, roughly thrown onto the hard ground. Lu Wei Jie used all his spiritual power to make a straight beeline, trying his best to pull away from Long Qi and his men. Alas, Long Qi had his eye on him and went straight after him.

Lu Wei Jie turned his head and wanted to strike out with his spiritual power, but before he could even see where Long Qi had disappeared to, he found Long Qi's foot driven straight into his abdomen and before he knew it, he found himself sailing a long way up into the air!

Chapter 502:”Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form (2)”

Everything happened in a flash. Lu Wei Jie was slammed into a thick tree and he vomited out a mouthful of blood. Before he could even recover from the shock, Long Qi had already picked him up by his collar and thrown him together with the rest of the disciples captured by the other soldiers.

Lu Wei Jie had always been worshipped and placed upon a high pedestal due to his exceptional spiritual power among the Zephyr Academy’s disciples. But he found himself now lying on the dirty ground in a hapless heap, not daring to raise a single word in protest.

The few Rui Lin Army soldiers surrounded the twenty odd Zephyr Academy disciples and drew out their razor sharp swords from their hips.

Light glinted off the cold steel and suddenly, the disciples all started wailing pitifully.

“No! Please! Don’t kill us! We did not mean it! We’ve realised our mistake!”

They had been anxiously waiting to loot the Rui Lin Army soldiers’ dead bodies just mere moments before and now they suddenly found themselves shoved to lie in the dirt on the cold hard ground. When they found themselves staring into the cold sharp swords pointed at them, the well pampered and always protected youths immediately knelt and pleaded pitifully for their lives. A few of the more timid ones had already wet themselves, a dark embarrassing wet patch staining the dirt below what they sat.

Fan Jin’s eyes widened in flustered shock, and he immediately rushed over to stand before them!

“General Long! Hold your swords!”

Long Qi's raised sword hesitated at that moment.

"I know that these scoundrels have committed an unforgivable crime, but they are after all still disciples of the Zephyr Academy. Please spare their lives on account of the Zephyr Academy and the academy promises to give you a satisfactory answer in return!" Fan Jin hurried to intervene before the unthinkable happened. Long Qi and his men were men who had lived fighting, with their lives on the line. They were men who belonged to the most ferocious strike force, and taking the lives of those disciples could very well be easier for those men than eating a regular meal. Fan Jin knew very well if he had hesitated a moment more, all of the twenty odd lives of these disciples would have been extinguished there and then!

Long Qi frowned deeply, his murderous rage still burning in his eyes as he said: "Having attempted to take the lives of others, they would naturally need to pay for it with their own lives."

Fan Jin was sweating profusely, feeling heavily overwhelmed by Long Qi's oppressive aura. Although he knew a lot about the Rui Lin Army, but he had never ever faced the blood soaked murderous aura of a battle hardened soldier up close, and the overpowering oppression was enough to almost make him lose his mind.

"I know, I know, but..... but all of you are at least still alive now aren't you? I know they have gravely wronged you, but..... we are talking about more than twenty over lives here. Moreover..... they aren't the real mastermind behind all this, or they would not have been moronic enough to have remained here in waiting. Their intentions might have been malicious, but they do not deserve to die for that. They are still very young and I would implore General Long to show some mercy and spare them just this once. I can personally guarantee, that the Zephyr Academy will definitely deal with them most severely!" Fan Jin really felt like crying then. If he was not the son of the Headmaster, he could jolly well let himself watch these idiots die. But as his father was the Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy, and if he was to readily allow these twenty odd

disciples to be killed here today, then the reputation of the Zephyr Academy would be utterly crushed henceforth.

Although in every Spirit Hunt carried out, it was not deemed abnormal for a few of their disciples to die, but for this particularly star studded team to be almost fully annihilated, it would be definitely raise countless eyebrows. For these disciples to have the ability to enroll into the Zephyr Academy, all the youths were either from fabulously rich families or from a strong tribe within one of the major powers throughout the lands.

If over twenty of them were to lose their lives at the same time here, and all their families were to come knocking on the gates of the Zephyr Academy demanding answers, the Zephyr Academy might not be able to answer to them.

Fan Jin's sweat would not stop flowing, and his heart pounded against his ribs. He greatly feared that Long Qi would ignore his plea, and carry out his slaughter as he intended.

Long Qi was silent, his face in a deep frown. If it had been anyone else, he would have kicked that person in the face and carried on with the deed. For a man who had lived his life that called for him to be merciless and unsympathetic as a military man, his will would not be changed that easily.

But, Fan Jin was however a comrade who was brought here by Jun Wu Xie and he could not totally disregard Jun Wu Xie in this instance and he turned to look at Jun Wu Xie for her opinion.

Jun Wu Xie stared coldly at the visibly trembling Lu Wei Jie and his teammates. Her mind did not register any familiar faces among the disciples. It was just as Fan Jin had said, that the mastermind behind the devious plot was not among them, but Ning Xin and Yin Yan who had escaped, leaving this bunch behind.

Chapter 503: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form (3)"

Those two had been quick in their escape and had left the rest of their team in the lurch. They must have intended to make these people their scapegoats and hoped that Long Qi's merciless blade's thirst for vengeance would be adequately quenched when it fell down on the heads of the rest of the team here and not pursue the matter any further.

That was a rather smart move, to use others to take the blame while they escape the wrath of the Rui Lin Army's men.

But rather vicious if one might say. To have abandoned a whole team of comrades so easily, to save their own necks.

Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow, and did not give any reaction at that moment.

Jun Wu Xie's silence made Fan Jin extremely nervous and made the hearts of the disciples awaiting their fate stuck in their throats in fearful anticipation.

When they heard Fan Jin address Long Qi as "General Long", those youths knew they were in for it big time. They were not a merchant's convoy as they claimed but were people who held extraordinary identities.

General.....

That was the form of address reserved for the commander of an army!

Lu Wei Jie who was suffering under the agony from the kick that Long Qi had given him, stared with fear filled eyes at Long Qi.

He had known that the identities of Long Qi and his men were more than what they presented themselves to be, but he had not thought that they were men from a military background. No

matter which country these military men belonged to, a commander from any of the armies would have more than enough reason to take their lives there and then. Having plotted to kill a commander from a country, that was a crime that not even the prestigious Zephyr Academy would dare to try to cover up!

At that terrifying moment, Lu Wei Jie wished for nothing more than to capture Ning Xin and drag her back here and give her two tight slaps. If Ning Xin had not been constantly tempting and coaxing him all this time, he would not have fallen prey to her alluring suggestions and gotten himself into this big mess. And when things took a bad turn, she had just quietly run away on her own, leaving him in the lurch to be captured by these merciless men!

As he stared at the brightly gleaming swords before him, an urge to kill Ning Xin started to blossom in the heart of Lu Wei Jie.

Fortunately Fan Jin had intervened in time but looking at General Long's look of disapproval on his face, Lu Wei Jie did not dare hold much hope. But then, he noticed that General Long had suddenly turned his head to look at an inconspicuous little youth, his eyes seemingly asking for approval, to seek the opinion of the youth.

Lu Wei Jie turned his head to follow Long Qi's line of sight and he was totally shocked by what he saw.

He had seen the youth once before. It was just before they entered the Battle Spirits Forest when Ning Xin had secretly pointed the tiny youth out to him, telling him that that was the youth that had attracted all kinds of curses and utter contempt from all the disciples in the Zephyr Academy.

As the second in rank in the last Spirit Battle Tournament, Lu Wei Jie had considered the insignificant disciple's miniscule presence to be beneath his notice. As for the curses directed at Jun Xie, he had heard a little about it, but he had brushed it off, not

wanting to be bothered with it. But Ning Xin's persistence in making a big issue out of it had finally drawn out a sense of contempt and hatred in him for Jun Xie, a person he had never even met, for his rumoured despicable deeds in the Zephyr Academy.

And Lu Wei Jie would never ever have expected that his fate, whether he would live or die, would finally fall into the hands of that very same inconspicuous youth that he had grown to despise.

As he watched Long Qi's eyes, he realised that it would only take a slight nod from Jun Xie, and his head would immediately be separated from his body!

Lu Wei Jie could not fathom the reason why such a powerful and resolute man addressed as "General Long", would seek the opinion of such a tiny and inconspicuous looking youth.

But he saw vividly, that his life lay in the hands of Jun Xie at that moment.

He had lost all his arrogance and his usual sense of entitlement and he could not afford to care about the pain and agony that wrecked at his body. He pushed himself to sit upright and his eyes were filled with terror and anxiety as he looked at Jun Wu Xie to plead: "Jun Xie! You are Jun Xie, aren't you!? I beg you! Let them spare us this one time. I guarantee that I will make up for all of this! This incident..... This incident was not what we wanted. It was Ning Xin! It really was Ning Xin, that slut! She planned all of it! She gave instructions for Yin Yan to lure that Guardian grade Spirit Beast here! Only she had the map of these regions. We couldn't possibly have known where the Guardian grade Spirit Beasts roam!"

Chapter 504: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form (4)"

In order to save himself and to exact his revenge on Ning Xin, Lu Wei Jie was anxious to spill the beans and tell them everything he knew.

"Why would she want to do that?" Long Qi was still frowning deeply. He did not understand how an agreement to cooperate could possibly turn out to like this. And why did that unlikeable young lady seek their deaths?

Lu Wei Jie saw an opportunity to exploit and said hurriedly: "For someone like Ning Xin, who had been so pampered and used to having everything her way all her life, thinks that the whole world must succumb to her seductive charms. Only she was allowed to lose her temper and throw her tantrums but no one can go against her wishes. She saw that you and your men possessed great power and were even able to take down a high grade Spirit Beast easily. That was when she intended to win your favour and rope you over her side. However..... you repeatedly ignored her advances and she felt extremely humiliated. When she decided that it was impossible to win you over, she plotted..... plotted....."

"Plotted what?"

"Plotted to lure a Guardian grade Spirit Beast to kill all of you. That would on one hand, quell her anger and after the Guardian grade Spirit Beast left, the team would be able to loot your bodies. She had said that mysterious men who were so highly skilled and powerful would definitely carry fine and precious items on them..... She knew that Guardian grade Spirit Beasts possesses a high level of consciousness and do not eat humans and she pulled us into this malicious scheme of hers." Lu Wei Jie observed Long Qi's expression as his heart pounded loudly. He was deeply fearful that one wrong word here would ultimately bring doom upon him.

Long Qi did not reply but turned to look at Jun Wu Xie.

Jun Wu Xie raised her head and her eyes glanced at the deathly pale Fan Jin.

Every word that Lu Wei Jie said peeled off at the layers of pretense that Ning Xin put up before everybody. The mask that Ning Xin wore, the facade that she was not involved in any conflicts had shattered and crumbled before Lu Wei Jie's shocking revelations. The ugly undeniable truth now stood clearly revealed before Fan Jin.

No matter how much he refused to believe it, the truth stood before him like a sore thumb.

"Did you hear that clearly?" Jun Wu Xie asked coldly.

Fan Jin shivered at that question and he raised his head. There was no colour in his face and he stood there frozen for a long while before he nodded his head helplessly.

Jun Wu Xie turned her eyes back. It might be good to force Fan Jin to realise that Ning Xin was no longer the same obedient and sensible little sister he knew in his heart when they were younger. That would save her the trouble of having to deal with Fan Jin's soft hearted nature which might make her revenge difficult when they got back to the Zephyr Academy.

Jun Wu Xie did not wish to see a situation similar to what happened to Mo Qian Yuan to fall onto Fan Jin, due to their tenancy for clemency.

Fan Jin might also be righteous, but he was more resolute.

"General Long, since these are the disciples of the Zephyr Academy, maybe you should leave it to the Zephyr Academy to deal with them. I believe that the Zephyr Academy would give you a satisfactory answer in regards to this matter." Jun Wu Xie changed her tune, and said to Long Qi in all seriousness.

Long Qi was surprised. He saw the looks that the disciples from

the Zephyr Academy were giving him from the corner of his eye and he suddenly realised Jun Wu Xie's intentions.

It seemed that the Young Miss still did not intend to reveal her identity here.

“If that is the case, it is decided to be thus. But the matter cannot be carelessly handled and muddled over. We expect the Zephyr Academy to give us a fully satisfactory answer.” Having served under Jun Wu Xie for a period, Long Qi was able to easily pick up from Jun Wu Xie's words, the unspoken intentions of his Young Miss.

The Young Miss must still have some use for these people and sparing their lives now did not mean they were letting the disciples off scot free. Their punishment when due, would be unavoidable!

“It will be done.” Fan Jin heaved a big sigh of relief, giving his guarantee.

“Then, right at this spot, summon your teachers here. I know that all of you are disciples of the Zephyr Academy taking part in the Spirit Hunt and all of you carry distress signal flares with you.” Long Qi's said, his face dark.

Chapter 505: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form (5)"

Fan Jin nodded, and he turned to look at Lu Wei Jie, whose face had turned completely white from fear. Lu Wei Jie did not dare hesitate a single moment and he retrieved his distress signal flare at his hip and released it immediately. The bright flare lit up the skies at the moment it exploded, and it gave out a shrill screech that reverberated among the trees in the Battle Spirits Forest!

At the same moment that the distress signal flare exploded, all the Zephyr Academy disciples gave out a sigh of relief. The youths that had formed the team that had been acknowledged as the strongest team assembled for this Spirit Hunt were now all watching with anticipation as the signal flare that announced their withdrawal from the event lit up the skies in a bright glow.

They thought no more of being number one, no more of being the strongest!

Nothing was more important than keeping themselves alive!

"The few of you remain here and watch them. If any of them attempts to escape, kill them." Long Qi was not going to wait there without anything to do. He made the soldier who was more seriously injured and another two of his men to watch over Lu Wei Jie and the rest as he left with Jun Wu Xie and the rest, making their way towards the Spirit Moon Lake, to pick the Aqua Spirit Grass that they needed.

Around the perimeter of the Spirit Moon Lake, everything seemed to be a picture of peace and tranquility. Within the dense forest that was highly fraught with untold dangers, a scene of perfect peace like this could very suddenly turn into one of blood and carnage right out from the depths of Hell.

Fan Jin and the rest watched and surveyed the surroundings on

one side, to prevent any sudden attacks from Spirit Beasts while Jun Wu Xie led the three disciples from the Cloud Treading Peak to go find and pick Aqua Spirit Grass.

Mu Chen's memory had served him right. Around the edges of the Spirit Moon Lake, the grounds were covered with wide swaths of light green Aqua Spirit Grass. Budding on the small leafed blades of the Aqua Spirit Grass, pristinely clear water droplet like crystals hung from on the ends of their leaves. While they picked the grass, they must be very careful not to squash and break those crystalline droplets.

In matters such as this, the others did not dare to recklessly offer to help as they feared damaging these highly fragile and precious herbs.

Qiao Chu turned his head everywhere for awhile, but finally grew slightly impatient and strode to come closer to Jun Wu Xie to ask in a whisper: "Little Xie, hurry up and tell me, why would you want to leave those people alive?"

Anybody would have realised even when they thought through their toes. After those useless bums plotted against the men from the Rui Lin Army, they were as good as dead. But Jun Wu Xie had surprisingly spared their lives.

Jun Wu Xie looked up at Qiao Chu. She had not intended to waste extra effort in explaining herself but when she recalled what Hua Yao had just said to her earlier, her heart softened a little and she said patiently: "With them around, Ning Xin would not have an easy life."

Lu Wei Jie and the others more than deserved to die but she had her eye on the two people, Ning Xin and Yin Yan, that this vicious scheme had originated from.

Ning Xin was an only child, the daughter of the Vice Headmaster. The fact that she had escaped back to the Zephyr Academy showed that she went back to seek shelter and asylum. All this while, Ning

Xin had enjoyed an impeccable reputation in the Zephyr Academy and she had always been consciously trying to maintain an outstanding image.

And Jun Wu Xie did not have much hobbies, but she liked nothing more than to crush and utter crumble the one thing that her enemies held most dear, right before their eyes.

This wicked streak, had somehow wormed itself into her, and it was not known when it had started.

Qiao Chu blinked his eyes. Jun Wu Xie's extremely short and concise explanation had not given Qiao Chu much information, but based on Qiao Chu's understanding on Jun Wu Xie's way of doing things, he gained an sudden insight into her underlying intentions!

“You intend to use the mouths of Lu Wei Jie and his gang to attack and completely destroy Ning Xin's flawless reputation she had so painstakingly built up all these years?”

As the daughter of the Vice Headmaster, who committed the nefarious crime of setting up a scheme to rob by murder, and framing her own fellow disciples for the deed. If news of the deed were to get out, Jun Wu Xie would not need to lift a finger and Ning Xin's impeccable reputation in the Zephyr Academy would ultimately be destroyed.

“I'm only giving her a taste of her own medicine.” Jun Wu Xie's lips curled up at the corners. Whatever Ning Xin had done to her then, Jun Wu Xie wanted to be sure that she returned Ning Xin everything, in its entirety.

She still had time, and she would slowly savour the sweet taste of revenge in the days to come.

Ning Xin had better not die on her too quickly!

Chapter 506:”Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form (6)”

The teachers of the Zephyr Academy had upon seeing the flare from the released distress signal, hurried over to its location.

The team in charge of safety for this Spirit Hunt was formed by the elite personnel in the Zephyr Academy. The leader of this team was the highly revered indigo spirit exponent in the Zephyr Academy, Nangong Xu. The team comprised of five other highly skilled blue leveled spirit users in an attempt to fully protect their disciples in case of any accidents that might occur within the Battle Spirits Forest.

Nangong Xu’s age was way past a sexagenarian, and his greyish white beard made him look seventy or eighty years old. However, his actual age had already gone past a century and he was an esteemed and well known figure, his name spread far and wide across the lands, as one of the most highly skilled exponents in existence. All this while, when distress signal flares were spotted, the job of the rescue usually fell onto those teachers who held blue leveled spiritual powers, but this time, even Nangong Xu moved out together with them. The reason being that the location where the distress signal flare was released fell in a region beyond the area the Zephyr Academy marked out for the Spirit Hunt. No one knew what kind of unimaginable danger the disciples might have encountered in that unfamiliar territories and they had no choice but to activate the strongest Nangong Xu among them.

Nangong Xu led the team to weave speedily through the dense forest towards the spot where the distress signal had been spotted, feeling mightily displeased.

Before the Spirit Hunt had commenced, they had repeatedly emphasised that none of the disciples were to step beyond the boundaries marked out on their maps. But the location that the

distress signal had been fired from this time had come from deep within the Battle Spirits Forest, which obviously showed that disciples had breached their given instructions.

However, when Nangong Xu and his team reached their destination, they were completely shocked by what they found.

They saw more than twenty disciples of the Zephyr Academy sitting upon the ground with their faces all pale, huddled closely together. Several tall and well built men stood around them with their sharp swords drawn in guard.

“Who are you people!? How dare you abduct our disciples of the Zephyr Academy!?” Nangong Xu’s face quickly twisted up in rage. The Zephyr Academy’s name was widely recognised throughout the lands and the Zephyr Academy’s uniform was well known to all the countries and the various powers. It was known that no one would dare risk incurring the enmity of the Zephyr Academy by mistreating their disciples. But what he saw before his eyes today, went way beyond any of Nangong Xu’s expectations.

The few soldiers from the Rui Lin Army who were guarding Lu Wei Jie and his teammates frowned, and before they could say a word, the teachers standing behind Nangong Xu had actually swooped in to attack them!

The Rui Lin Army soldiers could only hastily put up their hands in defence!

In a blink of an eye, the two groups were already caught up in battle.

The soldiers from the Rui Lin Army were already carrying injuries and their skills and power were inferior to the highly skilled exponents with their blue leveled spirits. The Rui Lin Army soldiers were quickly thrown into a disadvantageous position. The prior wounds on their bodies that had only just closed split open again successively and blood splattered all over, presenting a garish sight to the others once again.

The gravely injured Rui Lin Army soldier was also attacked by the teachers from the Zephyr Academy. One of his arm was immobilised by a splint and he could only lift his sword with his other arm, to fend off the attack!

Lu Wei Jie and his teammates had been anxiously anticipating the arrival of their teachers and they were greatly startled by the messy battle that had broken out before their eyes. The delight that had just sparked when the teachers arrived had not even taken root in their hearts when the sight of the blood splattering out from the wounds on the bodies of the Rui Lin Army soldiers exploded before them and their faces immediately became aghast!

“Teacher Nangong! Stop! Stop fighting!” Lu Wei Jie stood forward hurriedly, his face still pale, his entire body trembling visibly.

Nangong Xu raised an eyebrow and was about to speak when a heavy and robust voice sounded behind him.

“This is the way the Zephyr Academy does things? Their disciples fails at their attempt to murder and their teachers come to silence the target?” A chilling voice filled with rage suddenly rang out.

Nangong Xu turned his head quickly and saw a towering figure leading a group of people towards him. He peered closely at the group and noticed that there were several other youths dressed in the Zephyr Academy’s uniform behind the tall man in the lead, and recognised one of them to be the son of Fan Qi, the Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy, Fan Jin!

Chapter 507: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form (7)"

Fan Jin was following Long Qi and the rest as they returned and when they got back, he saw that the teachers from the Zephyr Academy were engaged in battle with the soldiers from the Rui Lin Army! The high strung nerves that had plagued him endlessly which he had just managed to relax a little immediately tensed up once again at that moment.

“Grandpa Xu! Make them stop! You must not fight them! They have to stop!” Fan Jin was on the verge of tears as he pleaded with Nangong Xu.

What was really happening here!

“Stop!” Nangong Xu said suddenly. The teachers from the Zephyr Academy stopped their attacks, and withdrew immediately.

Rong Heng and the other two disciples of the Cloud Treading Peak immediately rushed over to treat the wounds of the injured Rui Lin Army soldiers.

“What is going on here? Fan Jin, where do those people behind you come from? Why are they holding the disciples from my Zephyr Academy hostage!? Do they really think that people from our Zephyr Academy can be bullied so easily? If I do not get a good explanation here today, even if you are here, I will not let the matter rest that easily.” Nangong Xu’s face was creased in a deep frown. He had always been in charge of safety during the Zephyr Academy’s Spirit Hunts, and today, he had suddenly found that the disciples of the Zephyr Academy were actually captured and held hostage by external forces. He had deemed it to be an undeniable affront to the Zephyr Academy’s prestigious name.

Fan Jin hurriedly tried to explain: “This is not what it seems, Grandpa Xu. You are misunderstanding.....”

“Misunderstanding? The facts are before my eyes. Do you think I am blind?” Nangong Xu said coldly.

Long Qi’s stalwart face boiled with a silent rage beneath. He gave Jun Wu Xie a discreet glance and when he saw Jun Wu Xie gave him a slight nod, he allowed his rage to show and released it without suppression.

“I would assume you to be blind. You chose only to see the Zephyr Academy’s disciples held here, but did you ever bother to think why they are held?” Long Qi replied with a cold laugh, his impression of the Zephyr Academy growing from bad to worse.

“Why?” Nangong Xu challenged.

“Let them tell you that themselves!” Long Qi retorted.

Nangong Xu turned to stare at the disciples. Lu Wei Jie who had been the first to speak up to stop the teachers now shivered as Nangong Xu’s stern gaze fell upon them. They all knew that although Nangong Xu was highly protective of the Zephyr Academy, but he possessed a very straightforward personality. He was a man of his word, always righteous and impartial. If any of the disciples committed a wrong, he would mete out the same punishment even if it was Fan Jin or Ning Xin.

“Lu Wei Jie, speak. What really happened?” Nangong Xu’s voice was cold. “Just speak your mind. If anybody dares to bully any disciples from my Zephyr Academy, I will fight for your justice even if it costs me this old set of bones.”

Thinking that Lu Wei Jie might be holding back due to his fear of Long Qi, Nangong Xu prodded him on encouragingly.

Upon hearing Nangong Xu’s words, Lu Wei Jie started to tremble even more.

“It..... It’s not what you see..... Teacher Nangong..... Actually..... Actually we..... we attempted to plot..... against General Long and his men, and they..... caught us.....” Lu Wei Jie finally managed

with a badly shaking voice, stuttering as he went on.

With that confession of guilt, Nangong Xu suddenly found himself at a loss for words for a moment. His air of arrogance dissipated into the air, disappearing into the wind.

“What..... What did you say?”

“Plot against them? How lightly you are putting it!” He was still tending to the wounds on the soldiers of the Rui Lin Army when Rong Heng suddenly could not hold himself back and spat out these words: “Why didn’t you tell your teachers that you intentionally provoked and led a Guardian grade Spirit Beast to us with the intention to get us all killed! If we had not fortunately managed to escape, we would already be homeless souls within this dark forest now! With no way to redress the injustice!”

“WHAT!?” Nangong Xu was outraged! Rong Heng’s words were like cold hard stones, every one struck him upon his heart as those words fell into his ears. He turned his head anxiously to look at Lu Wei Jie. When he saw Lu Wei Jie lower his head guiltily, his face was suddenly overcome with panic.

Chapter 508: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form (8)"

Lu Wei Jie's reaction had given him the answer and no more words were needed.

"The Zephyr Academy is reputed to be among the famed top three academies but it seems that they are not above employing underhanded methods just the same! Their disciples plot murder in order to rob, and their teachers bully the weak and invalids. What kind of disgrace are they bringing to their name, aren't you guys ashamed of yourselves?" Rong Heng spat those words out, holding nothing but utter contempt for the Zephyr Academy. He had once belonged to the mightiest and most revered Qing Yun Clan after all, and before the Qing Yun Clan had been obliterated, they had not cared to be bothered much even when the Zephyr Academy's Headmaster himself had come right to their gates asking for an audience.

Moreover to a mere Nangong Xu?

So what if he was an indigo spirit exponent?

Their invited resident mercenaries then had no lack of indigo spirit experts as well!

Although the Qing Yun Clan no longer existed, his Master Mu Chen was the only remaining Elder of the Qing Yun Clan still alive. With a single word from Mu Chen, countless highly skilled exponents would move mountains just to gain his favour.

When the soldiers of the Rui Lin Army had gotten themselves injured trying to protect him and his fellow disciples from harm, Rong Heng had already been boiling with anger. And now, when even the teachers were exhibiting such tyranny without even listening to reason made him absolutely seethe in rage!

Nangong Xu's flushed red. Hearing the Zephyr Academy's

prestigious name so thoroughly insulted and put down, he could not help but feel indignant.

“Who are you? How dare you smear the name of my Zephyr Academy so lightly! ?”

Rong Heng snorted and laughed coldly to say: “I’m from the Cloud Treading Peak, a disciple of Elder Mu Chen, Rong Heng!”

The indignation faded completely from Nangong Xu’s face at that moment. And in its place, was an expression of utter shock!

Cloud Treading Peak!

It wasn’t too long ago that the Cloud Treading Peak had not enjoyed such fame. But after the whole Qing Yun Clan suddenly disappeared, those three words had in tandem with Mu Chen’s name, suddenly rang shrilly and loudly, reaching every corner throughout the lands! The Qing Yun Clan’s only surviving Elder, and the last bunch of disciples of his!

Presently, after the Qing Yun Clan ceased to exist, Mu Chen had in turn become the Qing Yun Clan!

The true meaning behind those two words, had exceeded anyone’s expectations!

Nangong Xu would never have dreamed, that Lu Wei Jie and his team would get tangled up with the Cloud Treading Peak!

Not just Nangong Xu, but even Lu Wei Jie had not ever thought of it.....

He had thought that Long Qi and his men were the most important people within the group of people. Little did he know, it would be the unremarkable Rong Heng and his fellow disciples.....

It’s the Cloud Treading Peak!

After the Qing Yun Clan vanished, they were replaced by Mu Chen and his disciples.....

Lu Wei Jie wished he would just die at that moment. He finally

realised that he had provoked a group of people whom he must never ever provoke!

With Mu Chen current exalted status and prestigious position, a single word from him would draw countless exponents to him! Whoever harmed his disciples, needless to mention Lu Wei Jie, as even the Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy himself would not be able to stop Mu Chen's might!

Lu Wei Jie's trembling grew even worse at that moment.

Even Nangong Xu's countenance was showing a tinge of green.

"My fellow disciples and I came to the Battle Spirits Forest with General Long and his men from the Rui Lin Army, and we chanced upon these disciples of the Zephyr Academy. They claimed to possess a map of the Battle Spirits Forest and made a deal with us for leading us here. But they had finally schemed to rob and murder us all. They had attempted to get us killed here in the forest, and steal the loot from our bodies thereafter!" Rong Heng said with disdain.

Upon hearing that, Nangong Xu's body swayed heavily.

Rui Lin Army!

That was the widely known, and reputed to be the most ferocious strike force!

He had not truly believed Rong Heng's words in the beginning, but after hearing of the Rui Lin Army, Nangong Xu was completely convinced. The Rui Lin Army were famed not for their battle strength and power, but they earned their reputation due to the fearlessness and ferocity on the battlefield. Determined and impartial, righteous and unyielding. They were a force that everyone held a deep respect for. Soldiers from that a force like that, would never spout any accusations with intentional inaccuracies!

Nangong Xu was losing his mind, just what had given Lu Wei Jie

and his teammates the guts to scheme against such a group of people. Disciples from the Cloud Treading Peak, and a general from the Rui Lin Army.....

They must have been seeking their own deaths!

Chapter 509:”Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form (9)”

“Did all of you really commit such atrocities?” Nangong Xu was trembling with rage, those kids had tangled with the Cloud Treading Peak and even gotten themselves entangled with the Rui Lin Army. These little bastards had really stirred up a big pot of trouble!

Did they know how much effort the Zephyr Academy’s Headmaster had put in trying to locate Mu Chen and these scoundrels had dared to attempt to kill Mu Chen’s disciples!

Wouldn’t this incident turn Mu Chen against them! ?

Lu Wei Jie was so terrified that his face had not a single bit of colour. When he came to realise that Long Qi was from the Rui Lin Army, he had fallen over backwards, his buttocks hitting hard onto the ground, wanting to cry, but no tears came out.

“Teacher Nangong! I wasn’t the one who started all this, it was Ning Xin! Ning Xin was the one who wanted the Guardian grade Spirit Beast to kill all of them! I was merely baited by her alluring words to carry it out!” Lu Wei Jie was almost screaming in plea, in desperation.

The matter was becoming too big to handle and there was no way he could shoulder it alone!

When he heard Ning Xin’s name being mentioned, Nangong Xu’s face paled once again.

“It was all her! She knew that General Long and his men possessed extraordinary skills and she had initially wanted to use the map she possessed to exchange for high grade spirit stones from General Long and his men. She later decided to try to win them over but General Long refused to play along with her. She felt humiliated, and it quickly turned to rage. She then schemed up

this plan to get General Long and his men killed. All of it was Ning Xin's doing! All her!" Lu Wei Jie was so terrified he couldn't think straight anymore, and he just heaped all the blame onto Ning Xin.

She was heartless first, so don't blame him for being disloyal!

Nangong Xu was deeply traumatised by the revealed truth and had was about to refute in Ning Xin's defence when he suddenly remembered. Just earlier, the teachers had spotted Ning Xin's distress signal flare and the location was not too far from here. When Ning Xin and Yin Yan had announced their voluntary withdrawal from the Spirit Hunt, it had greatly puzzled the teachers, and Nangong Xu himself had felt a little pity for their loss then.

Now that he had heard Lu Wei Jie's accusations, he found that he was beginning to understand why those two had voluntarily withdrawn when they were practically unscathed.

"Is it clear to you now?" Long Qi asked his voice dripped with derision. "Allowing their disciples to commit murder and robbery, and their teachers played accomplice to those evil deeds by injuring the soldiers of our Rui Lin Army. In regards to this debt, the Rui Lin Army will most definitely be coming to the Zephyr Academy to seek an answer for it."

Rong Heng added: "This incident will be reported to my Master when I get back and I'll let our Master demand for justice for us!"

Nangong Xu was feeling rather weak in both of his legs. The esteemed Rui Lin Army and the highly revered Mu Chen..... They were in for it for real this time! Even though the Rui Lin Army would not deploy their military might against the Zephyr Academy, but when news of this incident spread from the mouths of the Rui Lin Army and Mu Chen, it would not be long before the whole world would know the Zephyr Academy as a place which housed a bunch of petty thieves who would commit despicable murder to loot. The prestigious and sanctimonious reputation of

the Zephyr Academy would be crushed to pieces, without a trace left!

“I plead for the two gentlemen to hold your anger! This incident was caused by the Zephyr Academy’s inadequacies in the discipline of our disciples! I would implore that you would take into account of the Zephyr Academy’s name and grant us some time. The Zephyr Academy will surely give you men a satisfactory answer! The Zephyr Academy does not tolerate such atrocities!” To protect the prestigious name of the Zephyr Academy, Nangong Xu had no choice but to hurriedly speak out in assurance. He could not allow the incident to blow up any further. If this matter was not properly handled, the century old long standing renown the Zephyr Academy had built up, would be completely destroyed!

“Alright, we shall await the Zephyr Academy to give us a suitable reply in regards to this incident. But if the matter is not well handled, we shall employ our own methods to demand justice for this. I would ask that the Zephyr Academy do not disappoint us.” Long Qi retorted coldly.

“Yes. Yes.” Nangong Xu cowered, as he wiped off the cold sweat upon his brow. The stakes involved in this incident was too big for him to handle and he could only wait till he returned back to the Zephyr Academy, to have the Headmaster, Fan Qi, decide on it.

Chapter 510: “The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows (1)”

“And these disciples.....” Nangong Xu started to say as he stared at Lu Wei Jie and the others.

“You can bring them back.” Long Qi said curtly.

“Thank you.” Nangong Xu was feeling very much ashamed and he hastily retrieved the disciples before he apologised to Rong Heng and Long Qi profusely, reassuring them that he would handle the matter with utmost severity before leaving hastily.

After waiting till Nangong Xu and the rest had left, Fan Jin finally sighed in relief. He was still feeling a little awkward but he put up a brave front and said: “Nangong Xu has always been straightforward and candid. He will definitely report the whole matter to my father and the incident will be handled appropriately.”

Fan Jin was feeling most unfortunate at that moment. Why did such stupid disciples choose to enroll into the Zephyr Academy? They only dragged the Zephyr Academy’s name down.

Long Qi did not speak anymore about the matter but turned to look at Jun Wu Xie.

“Does Young Miss have any other instructions for your subordinate?”

Jun Wu Xie nodded slightly and said: “After some time, bring some men to come to the Zephyr Academy.”

“Yes!” Long Qi hesitated a moment before he said: “Has out Young Miss considered changing into another academy? The Zephyr Academy might not be the best choice.”

Fan Jin who was standing just beside them seriously thought about burying his head into the ground at that moment.

“No need.” Jun Wu Xie replied simply. The real reason she went to the Zephyr Academy was not to pursue knowledge anyway.

The matter had come to a rest for the time being. The injuries sustained by the Rui Lin Army soldiers were not mortal and with a little more treatment, they would be able to move freely. They have acquired the Aqua Spirit Grass they came for and as the herbs have not been processed and treated, they would not keep for extended periods. Long Qi and his group could not afford to remain in the Battle Spirits Forest much longer and they embarked on their return hastily.

After reluctantly bidding Jun Wu Xie farewell, Long Qi led the group back to the Qi Kingdom. When he left, he promised to come see Jun Wu Xie again when the men from the Rui Lin Army come pay their visit to the Zephyr Academy.

After watching Long Qi and his group as they disappeared in the distance, Jun Wu Xie finally turned her gaze back after a long while. Seeing Long Qi had reminded her of her uncle Jun Qing, making her feel as if she was still living in the Lin Palace, like she had never left.

“What do we do now? Continue?” Qiao Chu asked, his hands clasped behind his head.

“Yes.” Jun Wu Xie forced herself to regain her composure. She still had a long road ahead of her, the path towards strength and power, the path that would ultimately lead her home.

And Jun Wu Xie and her team embarked on their next leg of their hunt on the Spirit Beast.

With these characters present, the Spirit Beasts in the Battle Spirits Forest were in for quite a bashing.

With the Spirit Hunt nearing its close, they did not have much time left as they continued to hunt for Spirit Beasts they could take down.

It was dusk when the youths returned from their bountiful hunt and sat down in a circle beside the Spirit Moon Lake.

Jun Wu Xie bit at the dried meat slowly and watched the sunset, and no one knew what she was thinking.

Suddenly, she felt a gaze on her. She turned her head to look into the direction she had felt the gaze and caught a fleeting glance of a tiny figure flash past, in between the trees not too far away from them.

That fleeting shadow had been too fast and with the low light of dusk, she had not been able to see it clearly.

“What is it?” Qiao Chu stretch out his head to ask.

Jun Wu Xie narrowed her eyes, but she did not sense any danger. “Something’s close by.”

That shadowy figure had been tiny, and did not seems to be human.

“A Spirit Beast? The Spirit Moon Lake is where the Spirit Beasts around here come to drink. With us sitting here at its edge, many Spirit Beasts might just be sharpening their fangs.” Qiao Chu said with a big evil laugh.

“You should sleep by the lake tonight. When we wake up tomorrow, Brother Hua can come pick up your bones to make a tool out of them. Your bones are tough, the tool might just be of some use.” Fei Yan said, smiling wickedly at Qiao Chu.

Qiao Chu pouted and shifted his buttocks to come closer to Hua Yao.

“My tiny bones are not fully grown yet, when I reach beyond a hundred, I’ll willingly present my bones to Brother Hua.”

Chapter 511: “The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows (2)”

Hua Yao shot Qiao Chu a depreciating look that would translate to “Are you an idiot?”.

Fei Yan literally rolled his eyes at Qiao Chu shamelessness and continued to tease, “By that time, who would want your old brittle bones? They would have become useless.”

“Brother Hua will love to have it! Right? Brother Hua?” Qiao Chu asked, fawning coyly at Hua Yao with a pitiful puppy eyed look on his face.

Hua Yao refused to even look at him.

Rong Ruo watched them banter with a light laugh and reached out her hand to offer some rations to Fan Jin who had been silent all this while. Fan Jin gave Rong Ruo a bitter smile and nodded in appreciation, secretly envious of the close ties that Qiao Chu enjoyed with his comrades. He knew he treaded a different path from these guys especially after all the recent incidents that had rocked the Zephyr Academy, and Fan Jin only felt deeply ashamed and a sense of guilt towards Jun Wu Xie.

Jun Wu Xie was still dogged by a strange feeling that something was not right. The feeling that she was being watched had appeared once again but she had not seen any fleeting shadows this time.

And that same situation surfaced once again the next day. Jun Wu Xie and the team had just hunted down a high grade Spirit Beast when that feeling struck her once more.

This time, she did not try to search for it, but to secretly summon Ye Sha.

However, when Ye Sha came back to them, Jun Wu Xie was greatly shocked.

She only saw a rotund wooly little sheep gripped in Ye Sha's hand. Its rounded spherical shaped body looked very much like a wooly snowball. Two tiny horns curled on the top of the little sheep's head, and it's round eyes were brimming over with tears as it looked straight at Jun Wu Xie.

"This is..... a Spirit Beast?" Qiao Chu was staring in wide eyed wonder. He looked at the tiny Spirit Beast who was not much bigger than the little black cat and thought what a wonderful world he was living in.

Qiao Chu stretched out his finger to poke at the tiny sheep's little body and the little fella trembled a little.

"Meh~"

Jun Wu Xie's eyes flashed, but she made no action.

"This Spirit Beast has been tailing our Young Miss." Ye Sha stated.

"Huh? That's strange. It's such a tiny Spirit Beast, it must belong to the lower grades. First grade? Why was it following Little Xie for?" The soft fluffy feel made Qiao Chu enjoy himself tremendously and he ravaged the tiny sheep's soft wool, rubbing it vigorously.

Gripped in Ye Sha's hand, the tiny sheep's four little hooves kicked and struggled endlessly but it was unable to escape from Qiao Chu's violation, and could only bleat helplessly going "Meh~ Meh~~".

"HAHAHA!" Qiao Chu was getting carried away, and was beginning to get a glimpse into the reason why Jun Wu Xie loved Rolly so much.

'THUD!'

One of the tiny sheep's front hoof suddenly hit Qiao Chu right on the bridge of his nose. The little but hard hoof had left a red glowing imprint right on the bridge of Qiao Chu's nose.

Qiao Chu was suddenly still.

“Young Miss, how do you want me to deal with this?” Ye Sha asked.

“Give me.” Jun Wu Xie stretched out her hand. The little black cat on her shoulder silently swept its tail over its eyes.

When the tiny sheep was in Jun Wu Xie’s arms, it turned itself over completely, and they saw that even its underbelly was covered in soft fluffy white wool and it really closely resembled a white spherical ball.

“Meh~”

Jun Wu Xie’s eyes narrowed, as she looked at the tiny wool ball in her arms, and drew in a slight breath.

She hugged it tight!

Rubbed its fluffy wool!

“Meh! Meh!”

“.....” Qiao Chu had the others fell speechless, and laughter soon erupted among the teammates. Seeing the tiny sheep cuddled, stroked and rubbed all over by Jun Wu Xie made them all roar out in laughter.

Outraging a Spirit Beast’s modesty, only Jun Wu Xie would be capable of such a thing.

After Jun Wu Xie was satiated, she squatted down and put the tiny sheep on the ground. The tiny sheep was still dizzy from Jun Wu Xie’s ravaging and was slightly swaying as it stood. It shook its head vigorously to clear the dizziness. After it cleared its mind, it tried to turn its head to look behind itself but found its view obstructed by its own fluffed up and abundant wool on its body and could not see anything else. It finally decided that it had no other choice and it started to raise its four little hooves up one at a time and turned itself slowly around before it raised its head to

look at Jun Wu Xie.

“Meh~”

Chapter 512: “The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows (3)”

Jun Wu Xie’s eyebrow raised slightly. The tiny sheep suddenly lowered its head and opened its tiny mouth and started to chew on the green grass around Jun Wu Xie’s feet, seemingly savouring it exceptionally.

“This Spirit Beast isn’t afraid of humans? Is it because its grading is beyond low?” Qiao Chu said laughing with tears in his eyes. This was the first time he had seen such a bumbling and foolish Spirit Beast. When other low grade Spirit Beasts sensed that humans were nearby, they would have ran and disappeared immediately without leaving a trace. But as for this little fella here, even after being repeatedly violated by them, it was still not afraid and still hanging around them.

And it was even feeding itself happily in enjoyment!

Wasn’t it afraid that they might kill it?

“Judging based on its size, it looks to be still an infant born not too long ago and still not too conscious of its surroundings, totally oblivious to danger.” Rong Ruo said, finding the tiny sheep rather lovable.

“Have you ever seen a sheep that was just born possessing such a thick layer of wool?” Qiao Chu challenged with an eyebrow raised, and Rong Ruo could not answer.

The tiny sheep seemed not to have heard Qiao Chu and just continued to chomp, chomp, chomp..... Not even raising its tiny head once.

Jun Wu Xie shifted her feet a little to the side to allow the tiny sheep a little more room to carrying on with its feeding, but she had not expected to see after she had barely shifted two steps that the tiny sheep followed right behind her, its little hooves tapping

on the ground.

Jun Wu Xie stopped her gait and the tiny sheep halted as well, and lowered its head and continued to chomp on the grass.

“..... Does that mean the little fella likes Little Xie? I know birds go through a nestling stage, but sheep..... do that too?” Qiao Chu asked, scratching at his head.

“No, they don’t.” Hua Yao affirmed confidently.

Light was starting to fade gradually and the temperature around the Spirit Moon Lake was dropping. Jun Wu Xie and her team had had a long day and they needed to rest. They repeated the same old trick and scrambled up high into the trees!

The tiny sheep that had been feeding on the grass around Jun Wu Xie’s feet saw that Jun Wu Xie was suddenly moving and it gave up on its feeding and trotted after her.

Alas.....

The tiny sheep looked up into the trees that looked sky high from its perspective and stared after Jun Wu Xie as she shot herself up quickly into the canopies, as despair filled the tiny sheep’s teary eyes.

“Meh~ Meh~”

“Wanna bring it up?” Qiao Chu looked down now almost negligible white speck at the bottom of the tall tree, thinking that tiny sheep was really persistent.

“No need.” Jun Wu Xie said coldly. As she pulled her clothes tightly around her to lie down, she let a porcelain bottle that contained the medicine that could keep Spirit Beasts away slip from her hand to fall down beside the tree. The tiny sheep was startled and it hopped aside in surprise. When it did not see any other reaction, it bravely walked over and lowered its tiny head to sniff warily at it before nudging the bottle a few times with its nose.

“You are afraid that it would be eaten up by other Spirit Beasts?” Qiao Chu had spotted Jun Wu Xie’s actions and he asked with a wide smile on his face.

She had asked him to not bother with the little fella, but she had softheartedly dropped that bottle herself. But there was one thing.....

Qiao Chu deeply suspected that, with that dumb little sheep’s low intellect, would it know that that bottle would be its life saviour when things got nasty?

“Sleep.” Jun Wu Xie turned her body and closed her eyes to rest. Qiao Chu and the others kept their thoughts to themselves and went to sleep, with mirth on their faces.

At the bottom of the tree, the persistent tiny sheep was still bleating softly. After some time, night fell and darkness enveloped them. The tiny sheep at the bottom of the tree seemed to have grown tired and its bleating stopped. It trotted around on its little hooves and leaned up against the roots of the tree to rest. After it laid itself down, it did not forget to take a bite of the green grass on the ground. Only this time, it did not swallow and its tiny face creased up in disgust, and it hurriedly spat out all the grass it had just put into its mouth.

“Meh.....”

[Not nice, not nice at all.]

The mournful tiny sheep grumbled in its mind, as it closed its eyes, falling asleep while feeling aggrieved, a crystalline tear lightly sparkled hanging from the corner of its eye.

Chapter 513: “The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows (4)”

It was early the next day when Jun Wu Xie and her teammates awoke. The tiny sheep was still sleeping and Jun Wu Xie gestured for all of them to remain silent. Qiao Chu and all the rest of the gang slipped soundlessly down the tree and ran away without a whisper.

It wasn't until the tiny sheep awoke and raised its little head to peer into the treetops, that all the wool on its wooly body suddenly almost jumped out of its body in fright!

“MEH!!!”

[Where did they go!?]

“Bwah ha ha ha!!!! You're really killing me! If you don't want that little fella following us, just throw him somewhere further away! But you made us all sneak off silently! Ha ha ha! I can't..... My stomach hurts..... Brother Hua..... save me.....” Qiao Chu had been laughing hysterically throughout the journey. Even the high grade Spirit Beasts were not a match for this group but they had been forced to escape sneakily from a persistent tiny sheep. It's was absolutely hilarious.

“Moron! Scram!” Fei Yan kicked away Qiao Chu who was about to taint Hua Yao with his “dirty paws”, his face creased up in disgust.

“But I am rather curious though, Little Xie, why are you not willing to keep that little fella? It is rather cute, isn't it?” Rong Ruo was rather puzzled by Jun Wu Xie's reaction. She could see how much Jun Wu Xie loved furry little animals, and logically, wouldn't Jun Wu Xie be happy to have the moronic little sheep follow her?

“Will die.” Jun Wu Xie said, frowning slightly.

Rong Ruo was taken aback, but knew what she meant.

Although the lifespans of Spirit Beasts were longer than ordinary livestock, but still shorter when compared to a human's lifespan. A Spirit Beast that belonged to such a low grade might just live a little more than a decade and Jun Wu Xie did not want to keep it as she was afraid the little beast would die on her one day and she did not want to deal with the heartbreak that would be sure to come.

If it stayed by her for a long period, feelings were bound to develop, and it was the same even for the usually cold Jun Wu Xie.

Hence, no matter how much she loved it, she would not allow herself to grow attached to the little fella with its short lifespan. She hated to see anything that she truly loved die before her eyes.

She might always seem cold and distant, but once she developed an attachment, it was difficult for her to cut ties.

Although she absolutely adored those cute and furry animals, but she allowed herself to only interact with them occasionally, and would never grow too close to any particular one.

The little black cat was an exception, due to the fact that as long as she lived, it would be able to accompany her till the end.

Rolly was another exception as it was a powerful ring spirit and it would not die under normal circumstances.

When they would not be parted by life and death, she would not have any misgivings about it.

“Cough..... Rolly will live a longer life than me! Do you want me to summon Rolly to cuddle?” Qiao Chu asked, suddenly coming beside Jun Wu Xie. He had always felt, despite Jun Wu Xie's cold and icy personality, the words she says sometimes made one's heart cringe in bitter sympathy..

It might be her extraordinary intelligence that made her much too aware of the potential heartbreaks, that caused her to restraint

herself so pitifully.

At such a young age, but bogged down with so much misgivings causing her to restraint herself from the things she loved, wouldn't that be very tiring?

Jun Wu Xie shook her head and when she looked up and saw Qiao Chu and the others looking at her with a "You're so pitiful, so heart wrenching" expression on their faces, she was rather surprised.

'Had she just said anything wrong?'

'Why are all their expressions so weird?'

"Meow." The little black cat swished its tail as it rested on Jun Wu Xie's shoulder.

[Do not use your own logic to assess the average person. Your words will always make them think that you are just a pitiful person with a tragic past, and you are just silently repressing your real self.]

Jun Wu Xie felt a slight twitch at one corner of her mouth.

She did not think she was pitiful in anyway, not even once!

After she was reborn, she had felt the bliss that she had never felt before!

The noisy banter continued as they went along on their way as they set their sights on the next target. They easily overcame the Spirit Beast who actually had a tear in its eye when it died.

Then, a small tiny white figure was once again hidden behind a line of trees not too far away. The round eyes sparkled as it stared at Jun Wu Xie standing just beside Fan Jin.

[Found them! Meh~!]

Chapter 514: “The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows (5)”

A snow white spherical ball of wool dashed forward, its short tiny little hooves fully extended!

Jun Wu Xie could spot the ball of white unidentifiable object from afar, dashing madly all the way straight at her!

“.....”

“Meh!”

[Oh no! I will be discovered!]

Just before it got to the spot right before Jun Wu Xie, the tiny sheep jammed its short little hooves to a sudden halt! But the built up momentum continued to carry it forward and the tiny round wooly ball fell onto the soft green grass. The tiny sheep panicked! It hurriedly raised up its two short front hooves to quickly cover its eyes completely.

[You cannot see me, you cannot see me.]

“.....” Jun Wu Xie stared at the tiny sheep right in front of her. She was speechless.....

Qiao Chu erupted into another bout of hysterical laughter.

You’ve tumbled, rolled and stopped right by our feet for goodness sake!

Covering your eyes does not mean no one can see you!

Can you come to your sheep “shenses”!!?

“Go.” Jun Wu Xie turned resolutely and walked away, not wanting to give the tiny white ball another glance.

Qiao Chu could not stop guffawing as turned and followed behind Jun Wu Xie and the others.

The tiny sheep finally peeked out under its hoof. And when it saw the departing back of Jun Wu Xie, it hopped up onto its four little hooves and followed behind, its hard hooves tapping on the ground.

Throughout the rest of the journey, whenever Jun Wu Xie stopped her feet, Qiao Chu would always find a dumb tiny sheep whenever he turned his head behind to look, lying flat on the ground, its tiny front hooves covering its eyes.....

And once Jun Wu Xie resumed walking, that dumb tiny sheep would follow, its hooves tapping on the ground once again. That tiny sheep was sure..... exceptionally determined!

Till the moon was almost dipping behind the mountains in the west, the tiny sheep was still keeping at it, following behind Jun Wu Xie all the way, maintaining a fixed distance away from each other.

Finally, Jun Wu Xie was feeling rather helpless.

“Little Black.”

“Meow?”

“Drive it away.”

“Meow!”

[Understood! Scare it away! It will be done!]

The little black cat jumped to the ground from Jun Wu Xie’s shoulders and walked with poise and grace as it approached the dumb tiny sheep that was still hiding behind its hooves.

Qiao Chu and the others watched on with interest, trying their hardest to suppress the mirth and laughter threatening to burst forth in their chests.

“Meow.” Little black stood before the dumb sheep, its stance incorrigibly arrogant, its eyes looking down in contempt.

“Meh?” The tiny dumb sheep slowly lowered its hooves very

slightly, and peeked over them a little to see the little black cat standing before it.

[I've been discovered! I've been discovered! Meh!!!!]

At that moment, the tiny sheep was in a panic and every single strand of wool on its body almost stood out on their ends!

The little black cat stared at the tiny dumb sheep as it weaved about in circles in a state of panic, and found itself speechless. It licked on its paws and suddenly morphed into its black beast form! It opened its jaws wide, exposing its sharp pointed fangs, and gave out a full bodied ear shattering roar directed right at the tiny dumb sheep that was merely at size of its head!

“ROAR!!”

The sound reverberated, and the soft wool on the tiny sheep's body was pushed back from the mighty roar!

The tiny dumb sheep stared wide eyed at the ferocious and majestic black beast, and it froze, like a little sheep statue on the ground!

The black beast tipped up its nose and snorted contemptuously, feeling very pleased at the expression of utter shock on the tiny dumb sheep, its tail swishing happily behind.

[Little sheep, run before I eat you up!]

The tiny dumb sheep had not moved and its four hooves finally started to take a few steps backwards then.

Just as everyone had thought that they were about to lose the persistent little sheep from the fright the black beast had given it, an astounding sight materialised right before their very eyes!

The tiny dumb sheep, after having taken a few steps backwards, all the wool on its tiny body started to give out a brilliant and blinding light. The grass beneath its hooves started to rustle though there was no wind! A whirlwind suddenly kicked up,

swirling fiercely around the tiny body, enveloping it completely!

The blinding brilliance exploded! And everyone had to avert their eyes!

The brilliant light intensified and grew into a humongous glowing body! The rays of light then started to gradually disappear as they dispersed into the air!

A gigantic and unbelievably massive Spirit Beast suddenly stood before their astounded eyes.

The gigantic Spirit Beast was no stranger to all of them there. It was the exact same Guardian grade Spirit Beast that had attacked the men from the Rui Lin Army just days before!

Before the sudden appearance of the gargantuan Guardian grade Spirit Beast, the massive black beast suddenly looked to be so tiny!

Chapter 515: “The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows (6)”

The Guardian grade Spirit Beast opened its humongous jaws and gave the black beast a mighty roar that sounded like it would split the skies!

“ROAARRR!”

We’re dead!

We’re so dead!

We’re so damned dead!

Everyone’s mind was in suddenly disarray. Nothing in the world would have made them thought that the tiny dumb sheep that had so doggedly shadowed Jun Wu Xie would turn out to be a Guardian grade Spirit Beast! And it was the same one that they had fought!

“Tell me please..... This is not real.....” Qiao Chu’s legs were suddenly feeling weak and he was holding on to Hua Yao’s shoulder for support in order to remain standing.

‘That dumb sheep was really the same Guardian grade Spirit Beast!?’

‘Were the Heavens making fools out of them?’

‘Had he really, just some time earlier, violated a Guardian grade Spirit Beast! ? And he had remained in one whole piece.....’

‘It was really great..... to be alive.....’

The one that was most shocked was actually Jun Wu Xie, however, not much of it actually showed on her face. She only stared wordlessly at the gigantic sized Spirit Beast, and no one knew what she was thinking.

The most miserable one among them was the black beast.....

As it had shouldered the responsibility of driving the sheep off,

its entire body was now fully peppered with spit from the Guardian grade Spirit Beast.

As it stared at the exposed fang, that was as big as its entire body, reflecting its own image on its smooth white surface, the black beast almost lost its mind. It was thinking that its mistress had really done it this time!

“Meow~” The black beast turned tail, and tactfully slipped with a swoosh to jump up onto Jun Wu Xie’s shoulder in hiding, quickly reverting back to its little cat form as it sprinted and leapt!

“Meow.....”

[I almost died there!]

“.....” Jun Wu Xie patted the little black cat’s head reassuringly.

The Guardian grade Spirit Beast smirked as it saw the black beast revert to its black cat form and it raised its head smugly and snorted indignantly.

After that, the Spirit Beast lowered its enormous body flat upon the ground and stared with its massive eyes at Jun Wu Xie. Nine long tails swished happily behind it and they gradually began to fold back onto its body, wrapping and twisting, and the entire body of the Spirit Beast started to visibly shrink and decrease in size, until it turned into the mini sheep that had been tailing them, before it stopped.

“.....” Qiao Chu’s mouth was badly twisted.

Fei Yan’s eyes were like saucers, as she gulped noisily.

Hua Yao and Rong Ruo exchanged glances and attempted to smile bitterly at each other.

Fan Jin had not recovered and made like a statue.

Tap, tap, tap.

The incredibly powerful dumb sheep trotted upon its short little

hooves to come stand before Jun Wu Xie, a seemingly proud expression upon its upturned face, as it stretched its short hooves fully straight, attempting to stand as tall as it could.

“Why are you following me?” Jun Wu Xie finally realised the dumb sheep’s real identity. It was not a low grade Spirit Beast that did not possess any consciousness. It was actually Guardian grade Spirit Beast, capable of intelligence.

It, would understand what she said.

The dumb sheep trotted closer, and walked one circle around Jun Wu Xie’s feet. It lowered its head and chomped on a mouthful of fresh green grass, and raised its head, to allow Jun Wu Xie to see it chew and finally swallow the green grass in its mouth.

“Meh~”

[The grass around you, is delicious~]

[Meh likes it~]

Jun Wu Xie did not understand “sheep” and fortunately, the little black cat seemed to know what the dumb sheep meant, and translated it for Jun Wu Xie.

Jun Wu Xie finally understood why a dumb looking tiny sheep, which in actual fact was an all powerful Guardian grade Spirit Beast, would keep following her.

As her ring spirit was a plant spirit, although people would not feel it, all plants around her would be able to sense Little Lotus’ essence, and under its influence, undergo a subtle change.

And this Guardian grade Spirit Beast here, had in the process of battling Jun Wu Xie, detected the scent from her, and been hence attracted by it.

Think, what kind of allure would more delicious and tastier green grass bring to a dumb sheep.....

The choice is unthinkably obvious!

Chapter 516: “The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows (7)”

The fact that the Snow Lotus would give out such an effect was something that even Jun Wu Xie had not thought of.

Qiao Chu and the rest did not understand what the dumb sheep had said, and neither did they know what the little black cat had said, so they only stared at Jun Wu Xie blankly, waiting for her to explain.

Jun Wu Xie had no choice but to briefly explain the dumb sheep’s bleating to them.

“So that means when it ran off suddenly when it battled us before, it was all because of Little Xie?” Qiao Chu asked as he rubbed at his chin. He had wondered at that time why such a powerful Guardian grade Spirit Beast would beat a retreat that quickly.

The dumb sheep possessed a high level of spirit consciousness and had understood what Qiao Chu said. It lowered its head sheepishly, as if slightly ashamed, one of its front hooves pawing at the grass on the ground.

[Actually, at that time, it had run away just because it was terribly afraid of pain.....]

[But that, would remain a secret. No matter what, it would not tell this to them!]

[Humph!]

[Not one word!]

“Meh~ Meh~” The dumb sheep raised its head and looked at Jun Wu Xie, its eyes unusually determined.

[I want to stick to you for now onwards!]

The little black cat's mouth was twitching as it did its best to fully translate the dumb sheep's words for Jun Wu Xie.

Jun Wu Xie remained silent, but did not choose to reject either. She stared at the dumb sheep, looking as though she was contemplating whether to accept or reject.

The dumb sheep blinked its eyes innocently at Jun Wu Xie and suddenly, it seemed to have remembered something. It tipped its rotund spherical body and fell to the ground on its side. It continued to struggle and kick, and finally managed to flip itself on its back, exposing its little belly all covered in wool, while it straightened all four of its short hooves outwards.

The dumb sheep's compromised position looked so comical Qiao Chu immediately doubled over in laughter, clutching at his tummy.

“What is this! ? And coming from a Guardian grade Spirit Beast at that! Ha ha ha..... This is just too funny.....” Qiao Chu was wiping the tears flowing down his face.

The dumb sheep ignored Qiao Chu totally and remained in its position, not moving an inch.

[Humph! Stupid humans! Its ingenuity would never be understood by common humans like that guy there!]

Jun Wu Xie suddenly squatted down on the ground and stretched out her hand to rub the dumb sheep's belly. That incredibly soft and fluffy touch on her fingers made Jun Wu Xie close her eyes in satisfaction in an instant!

“You can come with me, but you will have to listen to everything that I say.” Jun Wu Xie said as she continued to rub on the dumb sheep's belly.

“Meh~”

[It just knew that its ingenuity was unparalleled! Meh~!]

The dumb sheep had actually not so dumbly remembered that Jun Wu Xie had seemed to be very interested in the wool upon his body when she had carried it in her arms earlier. It had suddenly been struck with this ingenious idea to sacrifice its chastity to win Jun Wu Xie's acceptance.

After having tasted the grass nourished by the Snow Lotus' essence once, it had not been able to forget the sweet succulent taste and did not want to eat normal grass anymore. If it was not able to follow Jun Wu Xie, it might very well turn to skin and bones soon without tasting that unforgettable divine taste again!

"Name." Jun Wu Xie asked.

"Meh~ Meh~"

That did not need translating and the little black cat was spared the task.

"Meh meh?" She asked, an eyebrow raised.

"Meh! Meh!"

[It's Lord Meh Meh!]

The little black cat translated, its whiskers quivering.

"Lord Meh Meh?"

"Meh~"

Qiao Chu and the rest of the team stared wordlessly as they watched a human and sheep converse. The conversation was interspersed with the little black cat's meowing and all of the people watching were terribly confused.

After setting the conditions with Lord Meh Meh, Jun Wu Xie no longer stopped it from following them. And having acknowledged its new "feedtress", Lord Meh Meh was hopping happily along, chomping up a circle of grass around Jun Wu Xie's feet. The look of absolute satisfaction showed just how pleased it was with the feed.

“You really want to keep it?” Qiao Chu was still unable to come to terms with this sudden new development. People came to the Battle Spirits Forest to hunt Spirit Beasts and retrieve spirit stones. Jun Wu Xie outshone everyone in this aspect, besides killing Spirit Beasts, she was bringing one back with her!! And a Guardian grade one at that!

What kind of heaven defying luck was that! ?

“Mmm.” Jun Wu Xie nodded. If the concern regarding its lifespan is addressed, she couldn’t have been more pleased to keep a cute furry live pet.

Chapter 517: “The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows (8)”

Lord Meh Meh might not be overly smart but its battle power was rather impressive. It made for an excruciatingly adorable pet and could efficiently double up as a strong melee force. It was an extremely welcome addition to Jun Wu Xie in her relentless pursuit of power and strength.

Moreover.....

She did not even have to fork out anything to feed it. As long as grass grew wherever they went, Lord Meh Meh would be well satisfied.

“Its name is Lord Meh Meh? You named it?” Qiao Chu asked, his face incredulous.

“It told me.” Jun Wu Xie said stoically.

“.....” What an unbelievable Spirit Beast this was, it not could transform, it was able to give itself a name. But..... what kind of a wacky name was that! ?

“Erm..... Although I’m a little overwhelmed right now, but it’s not too bad. With Lord Meh Meh here with us, we wouldn’t need to worry about spirit stones anymore.” Qiao Chu said, rather optimistically.

For a Guardian grade Spirit Beast to take on other Spirit Beasts, it would be just like slicing through radishes, it would be so easy!

However..... Qiao Chu quickly realised that he might have been a little too naive!

The possibility that ordinary Spirit Beasts would confront a Guardian grade Spirit Beast was equivalent to a big fat zero. Lord Meh Meh would unquestionably be able to kill the other Spirit Beasts within a second, but there was a prerequisite before that!

They had to find Lord Meh Meh a target first!

The Guardian grade Spirit Beast following behind them doggedly, like a tail on Jun Wu Xie's back, its hard hooves tapping incessantly upon the ground and it would take a chomp of the grass, as it followed closely behind Jun Wu Xie. Although by all looks, it looked every inch to be just a dumb sheep in its current form, it was nevertheless a genuine and fully authentic Guardian grade Spirit Beast and the aura that emanated from its mere presence, had well alerted all Spirit Beasts in a hundred meter radius and all the Spirit Beasts had long scattered in all directions from the overwhelmingly powerful aura of Lord Meh Meh before Qiao Chu and the others could even approach their targets!

Killed in a blink?

Hahaha.....

Blink all you want!

Find it a Spirit Beast in the first place!

Qiao Chu could not even find the tears although he really wanted to cry at that moment.

Till the last night before the Spirit Hunt was scheduled to end, Qiao Chu and the others had not even seen the shadow of a single Spirit Beast within the vast Battle Spirits Forest. The dark dangerous forest which had crawled with Spirit Beasts before, suddenly seemed that they had all become extinct, where they were not able to find a single trace of them.

Sitting beside a fire, Qiao Chu looked crestfallen as he stared at Lord Meh Meh who was grazing the grass around the feet of Jun Wu Xie, his eyes filled with resentment.

"It's all your fault! We did not even smell a single Spirit Beast!" Qiao Chu was indignant. He felt as though he had been conned.

Lord Meh Meh raised its head. It looked at Qiao Chu and tilted its head, its face looking rather puzzled.

“You can’t blame it for that. The aura of a Guardian grade Spirit Beast is too strong and it had decreased quite a lot by taking its current miniature form. If Lord Meh Meh had remained in its original form, not to mention a hundred meter radius, you double the distance and you still wouldn’t begin to dream of seeing a single Spirit Beast.” Fan Jin said with a laugh, feeling extremely happy that Lord Meh Meh had chosen to join the party. He had been feeling very guilty towards Jun Wu Xie and seeing Jun Wu Xie gain such an exemplary Spirit Beast as her protector, he was really happy for her.

“Spirit Stones! Spirit Stones!” Qiao Chu moaned, his hands covering his face, having no appetite to even eat.

“We had quite a haul of Spirit Stones from before, the last few days would not have made that big a difference right?” Fan Jin saw Qiao Chu’s mournful look and could not help but feel a little curious. The team had successfully hunted down a good number of Spirit Beasts throughout the Spirit Hunt and that had included quite a few high grade Spirit Beasts. With this result, they would most definitely stir up quite a storm after the Spirit Hunt ended, so why was Qiao Chu still feeling so miserable?

“You wouldn’t understand.” Qiao Chu said with a heavy sigh.

The few of them in the gang had intended right from the start to not hand their Spirit Stones over to the Zephyr Academy. To these poor youths who had lived in abject poverty for years, these spirit stones were precious money, rarely available to them. They had not enrolled into the Zephyr Academy aspiring to become diligent and studious disciples, and the Spirit Hunt had just been a bonus activity for them. They were not about to give up such a large amount of treasured Spirit Stones in exchange for mere scores!!

Chapter 518: “The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows (9)”

They would naturally keep it and exchange them for money. Without a doubt!

Fan Jin was not aware of their intentions and had taken out his own share of spirit stones for the others to distribute but was rejected by Hua Yao.

After filling up its tummy, Lord Meh Meh was finally willing to bother itself with these “ignorant humans”. In his eyes, only its “feedstress” was worth its attention.

But.....

After having heard Qiao Chu’s incessant grumblings, Lord Meh Meh raised its head and stared at its “feedstress”, a look of worry on its face.

Under the warm glow from the fire, Jun Wu Xie’s face did not show much of an expression but only had her head and eyes lowered, and was only nibbling at the rations held in her hand.

[But what if its “feedstress” were to think that it was trying to interfere with the humans’ affairs? What should it do then?]

Worried that it would be despised by the irreplaceable “feedstress” it had just found, Lord Meh Meh trotted over to stand right before Jun Wu Xie.

Jun Wu Xie raised her head a little and looked at the dumb sheep before her eyes. She then reached out and ruffled the soft wool on the fluffy little sheep.

“Meh~”

[My “Feedstress”, I will prove that I can contribute too!]

“?” Jun Wu Xie was rather puzzled.

Anxious to gain Jun Wu Xie's approval, Lord Meh Meh turned its tiny little head and stuck its mouth into its thick covering of wool and rummaged through it vigorously.

After a while, it turned its head back with its mouth full. It then lowered its head and opened its mouth.

Clink, clatter, clunk.....

A heap of myriad coloured, in assorted sizes, spirit stones poured out and scattered around Jun Wu Xie's feet.

"....." Jun Wu Xie's eyes widened at the sight.

The moaning Qiao Chu at the side suddenly found his jaw dropped to the ground.....

"These are Spirit Stones?" Fei Yan stretched out his hand, intending to pick up a piece to take a closer look at it, but before he could pick it up, a tiny hoof had suddenly stepped onto it possessively, refusing to let it budge!

"Meh!"

[This is for my "Feedstress"!]

"....." Fei Yan's mouth twitched in annoyance. Although he did not understand what Lord Meh Meh was bleating about, but judging from the expression and Lord Meh Meh's actions, its meaning couldn't be any clearer, so Fei Yan had no choice but to release the spirit stone.

After Lord Meh Meh was satisfied, it finally lifted its little hoof off.

It then went to those spirit stones that had rolled a little further and pushed them with its tiny hooves to gather them all closer around Jun Wu Xie.

"Meh~" and Lord Meh Meh raised its head proudly.

[Lord Meh Meh is the absolute best!]

Jun Wu Xie stared at the dumb sheep that was looking mighty proud of itself and remaining in that position trying so hard to win her praise, she relented and stretched out her hand to rubbed the sheep on its head.

“Meh~” The dumb sheep was extremely pleased and it trotted over to lie down beside Jun Wu Xie’s feet. Even though it had already eaten its fill, it found out that it was rather invigorating to lie down on the extra sweet smelling grass beside Jun Wu Xie!

[If it had known that its “feedstress” liked these sparkling stones so much, it would have kept all those sparkling stones from the Spirit Beasts it had killed in the past.]

The little black cat could not make itself look on and raised its paws over its eyes. The little cat could not come to terms with the fact that it had been scared off by this totally brainless and moronic example of a dumb sheep just yesterday.

[That was a “cat”astrophe! How humiliating!]

Qiao Chu stared at the heap of spirit stones, and his eyes were totally sparkling with greed. But with Fei Yan having set as a prime example, he did not dare lay his hands of them. But.....

“Little Xie, when we get back, what do you say we make a trip to the auction house?” The heap of spirit stones before him, sparkled just like a mountain of gold.

And based on his observation, all those spirit stones were not too small in size, looking to have been retrieved from a medium grade spirit beast at least, and mixed within that mesmerizing pile, he could see quite a number of high grade spirit stones as well!

Just that one mouthful from Lord Meh Meh had far surpassed what they had managed to slowly gather from days of fighting Spirit Beasts!

“Sure.” Jun Wu Xie nodded. She had almost depleted the banknotes she had with her and she intended to keep a portion of

the Spirit Stones and wait till Long Qi and his men arrive at the Zephyr Academy to demand for an appropriate answer for the prior incident and have them bring them back to the Qi Kingdom. As for the rest, using them to beef up their financial resources would not be a bad idea.

The amount of money they had needed to raise to enroll into the Zephyr Academy had gradually made Jun Wu Xie aware that it was a necessity to have some money on them all the time!

Chapter 519: “The Spirit Hunt Ends (1)”

With the dumb sheep with them, Jun Wu Xie and her team decided to give up on hunting any Spirit Beasts. All of them were set to return early the next morning and that would mark the end of the Spirit Hunt.

This Spirit Hunt meant differently for different disciples. To some, it might be just the same as all the previous Spirit Hunts, and to others, it might have been an unforgettable experience. But to another group of disciples, their lives had ended there, within the dark depths of the Battle Spirits Forest.

Groups of disciples started to return, wave after wave. Some came back happy while some came back sad and miserable. Quite a number of them came in carrying wounds on their exhausted bodies, and carried by their teammates.

The weary youths who had toiled through the entirety of the Spirit Hunt were ecstatic to finally be leaving the Battle Spirits Forest. The strong ones had the opportunity to prove their strength and power by killing various Spirit Beasts, while the weak who would have been a constant target and mercilessly hunted by Spirit Beasts and other disciples, had to survive every single day by running and hiding, making it a miserable experience for them.

The teachers counted and totaled the returning disciples one by one and recorded the quantity of spirit stones they had in their possession. Some displayed their impressive hauls and some presented empty hands, and all kinds of emotions were witnessed.

Jun Wu Xie and her team returned at a time that was neither too early nor too late. When they walked into the camp, the place was already filled with other disciples who had returned before them. For most of them, their nerves had constantly been on edge for the past seven days and they were finally able to relax. The disciples huddled closely together, sharing their exploits and harrowing

experiences, using what they had witnessed in the Battle Spirits Forest as fodder, albeit with much exaggeration. But no one would bother to point out any contradictions or delve deep into their stories and tales of valor at that time, as they all just needed some entertainment, as they rested their weary hearts and bodies.

When Jun Wu Xie and her group returned, the teacher that tallied their scores was one that they had never met before. The few of them just handed over a few low grade spirit stones to just brush the issue aside, and totally ignored the upraised eyebrow of the teacher before them. Fan Jin had initially intended to hand over all the Spirit Stones he had on him.

But when he saw what Jun Wu Xie and the others did, he retained a large part of his spirit stones with him and only handed over a few pieces.

“Fan Jin, when you take part in the Spirit Hunts in future, do not pair yourself up with useless disciples again.” The Teacher who was in charge of tallying their scores had upon seeing Fan Jin’s “results”, frowned deeply. Fan Jin had always enjoyed a stellar reputation in the Zephyr Academy and his righteous and upright character had made him popular with the teachers. Although he was the strongest or most powerful, they still expected much from him.

When Fan Jin had taken part in the previous Spirit Hunts, he might not have hauled in the most spirit stones, but his results had still well surpassed most of the others. But this time, the quantity that Fan Jin had handed in, was significantly less than what he had acquired before, and they were all just low grade spirit stones, without a single medium grade stone among them.

That Teacher had naturally blamed Fan Jin’s less than stellar result onto the ragtag bunch of Jun Wu Xie and the disciples from the branch division.

Fan Jin gave the Teacher a sheepish smile and did not say

anything.

Throughout the whole Spirit Hunt in the last seven days, he had not had to even exert much of an effort at all. With Qiao Chu and company in his team, there were not many opportunities that gave him any chance to make himself useful at all.

After tallying their results, Qiao Chu and the other three of them were to go to the camp set up for disciples from the branch division. Jun Wu Xie bade their farewell and they were going to leave when Fan Jin rushed over to them at that moment.

“Qiao Chu! Guys! Wait a moment!”

Qiao Chu turned his head, puzzled as he saw Fan Jin running over to them, panting heavily, but with a big smile on his face.

“Big brother Fan, what is it?” Qiao Chu had a good impression of Fan Jin.

“These spirit stones, are for all of you.” Fan Jin took out all the spirit stones he had hidden earlier and pressed them into Qiao Chu’s hand.

“Why didn’t you hand them in?” Qiao Chu was surprised, the weight of the spirit stones in his hand was very close to what they had given to Fan Jin in their even distribution.

Fan Jin replied, a little embarrassed: “For this Spirit Hunt, I did not contribute much. All these should rightfully belong to all of you as I cannot take credit for all the efforts that you guys had put in. I still have matters I need to look into back there, so I’ll make a move. Let’s talk again.” With that, Fan Jin turned without waiting for Qiao Chu to reply and ran off.

Qiao Chu scratched the back of his head, and Rong Ruo laughed.

That Fan Jin might be a little too inflexible at times but he has an absolutely honest and upright nature.

He is definitely a good guy.

Chapter 520: “The Spirit Hunt Ends (2)”

Within the noisy and bustling campgrounds, a single figure attracted many eyes to turn.

The youths who had been huddled together chatting away suddenly turned and fixated their gaze on the figure that had attracted all their eyes.

Jun Wu Xie walked slowly into the campgrounds, the black cat rested lazily on her shoulders. But what had made all those pairs of eyes to stare at them was actually the tiny Lord Meh Meh trotting closely behind Jun Wu Xie.

The weak looking tiny lamb trotted, shadowing Jun Wu Xie like a little tail on Jun Wu Xie’s back. Its tiny form and fluffy looks attracted quite a few fond gazes from the girls but most of the male disciples snorted derisively as their eyes fell onto that scene.

The Battle Spirits Forest was filled with all kinds of Spirit Beasts. They ranged from the strongest Guardian grade Spirit Beasts to the weakest and lowliest low grade Spirit Beasts.

Some of the low grade Spirit Beasts were not even equipped to perform any attacks and were the prime targets of many of the disciples. They usually possessed qualities just like Lord Meh Meh, small and tiny in size, looking incredibly innocent and harmless, and people could tell with one look that they were low grade Spirit Beasts. Jun Wu Xie’s face was already infamous and was almost a “celebrity” in the Zephyr Academy, and all the other disciples recognised her identity with a single glance.

Having gone into the Battle Spirits Forest and actually bringing a low grade Spirit Beast out with him made the other disciples look at him as some kind of a joke.

“With his powers, I doubt he would be able to even kill that low grade Spirit Beast following behind him. If not, why would he

want to have such a weak Spirit Beast dogging his every step?" A youth who had always detested Jun Xie could not help himself but grumble to his companion in a malicious tone.

"He might not be very strong, but no one can match up to him when it comes to shamelessness. Having latched onto Fan Jin, he would definitely make it through the Spirit Hunt safe and sound even if he could not achieve any outstanding results. You must have realised that disciples from the branch division had always suffered heavy casualties and if not for Fan Jin's protection, that little brat might very well not even make it back here alive."

"I saw it very clearly earlier. Senior Fan did not achieve good results this time round. He must have been dragged down by those leeches. If not for them, Senior Fan would never have produced such dismal results with his spirit stones."

Several youths gathered together to further criticize and condemn Jun Wu Xie and a youth who happened past them suddenly stopped and stared at them with a frown on his face. "Jun Xie is nothing like the kind of person you guys are making him out to be."

The youths who had been happily caught up with their condemnations and insults suddenly stopped and turned their eyes to look. They saw that it was a senior from the Beast Spirit faculty. That senior had not really been outstanding, but everyone knew of him now all because of one reason alone. That he was mentoring a new disciple this year, and that disciple was the only one admitted into the Spirit Healer faculty, Li Zi Mu.

Li Zi Mu's mentor was actually speaking out for Jun Xie!? Not a single one among them would have ever expected that to happen.

That youth nagged a little and left with his own companions. After they have walked a distance, his companions asked: "Why are you suddenly defending Jun Xie? Weren't you really angry that he had tried to steal Li Zi Mu's....."

The youth replied with a self deprecating laugh: “I had been too blind to see, and accused Jun Xie of stealing from Li Zi Mu. But even if you kill me now, I will never believe a word of it.” The youth had looked at Jun Xie with great disapproval. But in the Battle Spirits Forest, after he had protected Li Zi Mu from getting hurt, Li Zi Mu had not only showed himself to be ungrateful, but had even pleaded and begged to be accepted into Fan Jin’s team instead, which had really infuriated him. However, it was instead Jun Xie, whom he secretly despised, that left them with a variety of medicine without a word.

And it was all thanks to those medicine, that had allowed his team to recover quickly, and to fully complete the Spirit Hunt. If not for Jun Xie’s kind gesture, he would expect that at least half of his team would have died in the Battle Spirits Forest.

After that ordeal, he finally understood.....

That rumours were not to be believed!

Chapter 521: “The Spirit Hunt Ends (3)”

The team that Li Zi Mu had initially been with were greatly helped by Jun Xie in the Battle Spirits Forest and after returning back to the campgrounds, they began to consciously and unconsciously defend Jun Xie’s reputation.

They were betrayed by Li Zi Mu and had almost lost their lives in the dense forest. Jun Xie’s kind gesture had saved them and they were extremely grateful to him. But they had also fallen victim to Li Zi Mu’s exaggerated lies and had previously been party to criticizing Jun Xie as well and had condemned him. Hence, although they were feeling grateful in their hearts, they were too ashamed to face Jun Xie, as the guilt gnawed at their hearts.

The news that Jun Xie had brought back a low grade Spirit Beast back soon spread throughout the campgrounds. But this piece of news had not even stirred up much attention when another piece of news shocked the entire camp.

The team reputed to be the strongest with Lu Wei Jie and the others had surprisingly announced their withdrawal before the Spirit Hunt had ended, and no a single member of the team remained. They had all been escorted back to the Zephyr Academy by Nangong Xu personally.

That alarming piece of news shocked all the disciples present and endless speculations and debates ensued.

It must be known that the first ranked in the previous Spirit Tournament had suddenly disappeared that year and had not been seen in the Zephyr Academy for quite some time and Lu Wei Jie was the current most powerful disciple in the Zephyr Academy!

After the top ranked disciple was no longer around, everyone had subconsciously presumed Lu Wei Jie to be the strongest one among them and his team this time had not only included him, but also the third ranked Ning Xin from the previous Spirit Tournament in

addition to the ninth and tenth ranked as well. The team had also managed to rope in Yin Yan from the Spirit Healer faculty and the rest of the team members were all above average.

Despite all that, that most glamorous and star studded team announced their withdrawal from the Spirit Hunt midway through and led back to the Zephyr Academy by Nangong Xu himself. All the other disciples found the situation rather puzzling.

Many of them were guessing if they might have encountered a most powerful Spirit Beast, a extraordinary high grade one..... Or even a Guardian grade, that had severely injured them all and they had to be sent back to the Zephyr Academy. If not, any other reason that would make them suddenly withdraw would make things rather suspicious.

All kind of guesses and theories mushroomed and sprouted, while Jun Wu Xie and Lord Meh Meh found themselves suddenly overlooked.

The first position for this time's Spirit Hunt had suddenly been opened up to any of the teams there and the disciples were all brimming with renewed hope.

The Spirit Hunt had finally come to a close and the mentally and physically exhausted disciples were given one day to rest and recover before they set forth towards the Zephyr Academy. But none of them were aware of the fact that the death toll among the disciples for this Spirit Hunt had surpassed the numbers for any of the previous Spirit Hunts.

Neither did all the disciples know, in the very near future, a vicious storm was about to hit the Zephyr Academy, throwing everyone into chaotic turmoil.

For the journey back, Jun Wu Xie brought the little black cat and Lord Meh Meh to share the same carriage with Fan Jin. Throughout the whole journey, Fan Jin felt as though he was sitting on pins as Lord Meh Meh, who was carried in Jun Wu Xie's

arms, stared at Fan Jin with a look filled with enmity endlessly.

Fan Jin wanted to cry, he did not know when and how he had offended this horrifyingly powerful Guardian grade Spirit Beast disguised as a tame harmless sheep, and could only smile bitterly at the sheep, in an attempt to diffuse the enmity Lord Meh Meh had towards him.

It was in futility.....

Lord Meh Meh still stared him with those hate filled eyes!

[This guy deserved to be smacked!]

[He made my “feedstress” come into this rumbling and tumbling small box! Depriving the ve”meh”rable Lord Meh Meh of tasty green grass to chomp on!]

[Evildoer!]

[Lord Meh Meh should just eat you instead!]

If Fan Jin only knew what Lord Meh Meh was really thinking, he would have scrambled and fought to get out of the carriage at that very moment.

Poor innocent Fan Jin.....

He wasn't the one responsible for making Jun Wu Xie get into the box! Do not eat!

Chapter 522: “The Wind Kicks Up (1)”

The Zephyr Academy was still the same as before, quiet and tranquil, looking as if nothing had happened.

The Spirit Hunt had ended and the disciples returned, all of them comfortably settled back into familiar surroundings as they recounted all that they had experienced back in the Battle Spirits Forest.

But it was right within this tranquility that a storm was about to rage.

All the disciples had still not fully recovered from the trials they had undergone from the Spirit Hunt and it had barely been two days since they had returned back to the academy that an astonishing piece of news reached their ears.

Lu Wei Jie and the others in his team who had withdrawn themselves prematurely from the recently ended Spirit Hunt had been expelled from the Zephyr Academy in punishment. Although they had not revealed the reason, but the marching orders had been given. More than twenty disciples were suddenly struck off from the Zephyr Academy’s roster.

The list had even included the last Spirit Tournament’s second ranked Lu Wei Jie.

All the disciples driven out of the Zephyr Academy were disciples who had been in the same team with Lu Wei Jie, and with the exceptions of Ning Xin and Yin Yan, none was spared!

It caused a big commotion. Even when the Zephyr Academy tried to hide it, the astounding news could not be suppressed!

All the other disciples were shocked by the revelation. Lu Wei Jie’s sudden withdrawal from the Spirit Hunt with his team had already sparked off much debate and arguments, and now that all of them were suddenly expelled, the voices raised in questions

reached new heights!

In the Vice Headmaster's office, Ning Rui's face was dark as he looked at the pale faced Ning Xin, his eyes narrowed in admonishment.

"In regards to this matter, I have already cleared it with the Headmaster. Lu Wei Jie and the others will assume the responsibilities for it. Just make sure you stay within the office during this period and do not go anywhere. And only after the matter dies down, we'll make other plans." Ning Rui's mood could not get any worse at the moment. He had thought that after the recent Spirit Hunt, he would be rid of Fan Jin, one of the biggest thorns in his side. Never had he expected that Ning Xin would stir up such a big mess, failing in her mission, and even offended such powerful people.

The disciples of Mu Chen from the Cloud Treading Peak and the most ferocious strike force, the Rui Lin Army.....

When Nangong Xu had just brought Ning Xin and Lu Wei Jie back and reported the news to him, Ning Rui had almost exploded in rage.

He knew better than anyone what kind of a temperament his own daughter possessed. Ning Rui had privately approved of Ning Xin's power and her deviously scheming mind privately. She had always been cautious and dependable when carrying out her schemes and when he found out that she had stirred up so much trouble with such dire consequences this time, Ning Rui had been rather shocked.

Although he knew that the severity of the matter would even implicate the reputation of the Zephyr Academy, but Ning Rui could not leave his own daughter in the lurch. If Ning Xin's misdeeds were made known and spread, not only she would lose her standing in the academy, even his position as the Vice Headmaster would be put at risk.

Hence, Ning Rui had had no choice but to lower himself before Fan Qi this once, and pleaded with tears in his eyes. Fan Qi had relented when he was reminded of the fact that they were fellow disciples under the same Master and had allowed them to secretly remove Lu Wei Jie and the others, to hide the truth of the matter.

Expelling more than twenty disciples all at once, was also deemed to be a form of answer to Rong Heng and Long Qi.

“Yes. I have committed a big mistake in this matter and I plead for my father’s forgiveness. I promise to be extra careful in future.” Ning Xin nodded obediently, but her heart was still in a state of panic.

“I will leave Yin Yan in your hands for the time being. You should know very well how he should be used.” Ning Rui said, his eyes staring at Ning Xin.

Ning Xin acknowledged, submissively docile.

Ning Rui sighed and asked again: “You are sure you saw them clearly? Jun Xie and those boys from the branch division are really that powerful?” What really made Ning Rui uneasy besides the fact that their attempt at murder had failed, was Jun Xie’s, Qiao Chu’s and the others’ overwhelming powers.

Before this, Ning Rui had not perceived Jun Xie as a threat at all and seen the boy only as a pawn to be used to attack Fan Jin. He had not seen the need for him to personally deal with such a petty and lowly disciple then.

Chapter 523: “The Wind Kicks Up (2)”

But this time, Ning Xin had brought back shocking news with her.

Ning Rui had never even bothered to look Jun Xie in the eye and he was astounded to suddenly be hearing that he possessed such overwhelming power while those mysterious disciples from the branch division had possessed purple spirits!

That was just too unbelievable!

Purple spirits, they were the pinnacle of strength and power and they have not been seen in the last century. Why would the amazing power suddenly show up on disciples of the branch division? All of those revelations had shocked Ning Rui beyond words and he could not fully comprehend them.

“I’m sure I saw them clearly. It is all true.....” When she recalled all that she saw that day, Ning Xin could not help but tremble uncontrollably.

Ning Rui’s frown grew deeper, “Have you ever faced off with Jun Xie before?”

Ning Xin shook her head immediately.

“Never did. All the deeds were carried out by Yin Yan.”

Ning Rui tapped his fingers on his table while deep in thought. After a Fan Jin wins over the youths and all their overwhelming strength, it would deal a big blow to the plans we had in place. Since you have never been in direct confrontation with Jun Xie before, you should use everything within your ability to win him over and convince him to switch sides.”

He never believed in eternal enmities, and neither in eternal friendships. Ning Rui was able to size up the situation rather quickly.

When Jun Xie had still been perceived as trash, he had been happy to see his daughter use him as a pawn. But when the pawn was found to possess such great power, it would not be wise to leave him at the enemy's side.

Ning Xin was aghast. "Father, Jun Xie might have turned out more powerful than we expected him to be. But he is still rather young and I don't think we need to....."

"What do you know!?" Ning Rui chided sternly.

Ning Xin trembled.

"Where did you think those few purple spirits had suddenly sprouted out from? I have thoroughly checked on all the people around Fan Jin. Even if we don't mention him as he is still a young youth, but not even his well respected father will be able to win the favour of any purple spirit exponents! If Fan Jin was really that capable, he would not have been so badly toyed by your schemes. Those few purple spirit users must be linked to Jun Xie. If we manage to win Jun Xie over to our side, we won't just be winning over one person, but also the powerful exponents behind him!" Ning Rui said with a chilling laugh and based on Ning Xin's observations, Jun Xie had broken through to the yellow spirit level.

A fourteen year old who had broken through to the yellow spirit level..... What kind of an unbelievable gift was that? And added to that, he had a rather powerful ring spirit as well, which made Jun Xie an excellent target. But most importantly, it was what the inconceivable purple spirit exponents behind him would bring!

If he was able to successfully convince those few purple spirit users to come over on his side, and everything that was happening now, would no longer pose to be a problem anymore.

Ning Xin gasped loudly, as she realised how important it was to win Jun Xie over.

“But I have mentored Yin Yan all this while, whereas things between him and Jun Xie.....” Ning Xin’s voice trailed off as she bit on her lip. The fact that Yin Yan had been able to still remain in the Zephyr Academy was never her father’s intention, but it was all due to his own position in the Academy.

The disciples of the Spirit Healer faculty had always been independently controlled by Gu Li Sheng himself and not even the Headmaster was able to interfere with him. And the incident in the Battle Spirits Forest was known only to the few people Nangong Xu, Fan Qi and Ning Rui. In order to protect the Zephyr Academy’s reputation, not a single one among them dared to leak a word of it to anybody. Gu Li Sheng was hence unaware of the matter and would naturally not drive Yin Yan out.

Yin Yan had served as Ning Xin’s ward for a rather long time and clever as she was, Ning Xin knew how Yin Yan felt towards her.

But his position and his obedience had made Ning Xin find him useful and easy to manipulate. But if it came to threatening her own interests, there wasn’t much that Ning Xin would hesitate to sacrifice.

Chapter 524: “The Wind Kicks Up (3)”

“The truth of the matter was that Li Zi Mu was the one who started the whole farce and Yin Yan was inexorably duped into playing along with it.” Ning Rui said with a meaningful glance to Ning Xin.

Ning Xin’s eyes lit up and a smile grew on her lips.

“What Father means is for Yin Yan to go apologise to Jun Xie.”

Ning Rui nodded, satisfied. “This time, do not fail me again, or I will really be utterly disappointed with you.” Ning Rui’s steely gaze fell on Ning Xin suddenly felt the chill from those eyes. Even though they were linked in blood, Ning Xin was still extremely fearful of her own father.

“I won’t.....” Ning Xin gulped, as she hurriedly reassured.

However, things did not turn out the way as what Ning Xin and Ning Rui had planned.

Ning Rui had intended for Lu Wei Jie and the other over twenty disciples to become scapegoats for the disaster his daughter had caused and thought that the fact that Lu Wei Jie had a soft spot for Ning Xin all this while would make Lu Wei Jie be willing to hide the real truth behind the matter for her.

But.....

Ning Rui did not know that Ning Xin had hidden part of the truth from him. In order to save herself, Ning Xin had quickly only brought Yin Yan back with her and left Lu Wei Jie and the rest of the team in the lurch which had almost caused all of them to lose their lives.

In view of the circumstances, there was no way Lu Wei Jie would hide the truth for Ning Xin, especially when they got to know that he and the other over twenty disciples were to be driven out of the Zephyr Academy while Ning Xin and Yin Yan did not suffer any

form of punishment in the least.

Lu Wei Jie was absolutely outraged!

At the main gates of the Zephyr Academy, more than twenty disciples who had been expelled from the Zephyr Academy stood, their faces in tears, all dressed in civilian clothings after they were made to change out of the Zephyr Academy's uniforms, staring forlornly at the academy they had grown to become so familiar with, their hearts heavy.

They thought back to the day they had first come here, inspired to achieve their lofty goals, having stood out among the sea of applicants fighting to enroll, and had dreamed of the day that they would one day shoot up the societal ranks. But now, they had nothing left. They had not completed their studies and they had been thrown out by the Zephyr Academy. All their dreams and aspirations were suddenly shattered and the pieces lay crumbled upon the ground before them.

“Senior Lu, what are we supposed to do in future?” A disciple among the group asked as he looked sadly at Lu Wei Jie. Before the gates, many disciples had congregated, here to watch the miserable worms who had been abandoned.

Lu Wei Jie's face was ashen as he stared at the whispering disciples grouped together within the Zephyr Academy, and the rage within his chest reached an inferno.

“What to do! ? Since the Zephyr Academy is not giving us any other way out, then we need not observe or consider any sense of propriety for the academy as well! We can just bring them down with us! I will no longer hold this dump of an academy dear to my heart!” Lu Wei Jie shouted angrily.

The Zephyr Academy had after driving them out of the academy gates, said that those disciples possessed dubious characters and were despicable in their deeds.

That critique from the academy had inadvertently also killed the futures of all those disciples. With such a testimonial coming from the Zephyr Academy, which other respectable academy would be willing to take them in?

Lu Wei Jie was almost exploding with rage. The prospects for his future had been shining bright. As the second in rank in the last Spirit Tournament, he had everything he wanted going for him. But he had been bewitched by a slut and had committed a huge wrong, which finally destroyed his own future and the whole responsibility for it had been thrown onto him. But the one person from whom the whole scheme had originated from, had used her father's powerful position as the Vice Headmaster, to escaped unscathed. She had not only not been expelled by the Zephyr Academy, but was still enjoying her unchanged status as the Senior Ning that all the disciples respected.

Based on what! ?

A slut like that, a shameless girl like that, why should he allow her to achieve the great future that was denied to all of them! ?

Lu Wei Jie's expression became grim as his rage and the sense of injustice in his heart grew. It gave him the courage and determination to finally step forward and stand before the gathered disciples behind the gates, and shouted out loudly!

Chapter 525: “The Wind Kicks Up (4)”

“The Zephyr Academy does not do its revered reputation justice and abuses its power for personal gain! We will not accept the injustice!”

Lu Wei Jie’s loud proclamation made all the disciples within the Zephyr Academy prick up their ears!

They did not know what had caused Lu Wei Jie and the others to be expelled from the Zephyr Academy and when they heard what Lu Wei Jie had just said, they began to think that there was more than meets the eye in the matter!

Among the crowd of disciples, a tiny figure stood right at the back of everyone and a slight cold smile appeared on the delicate features on that face.

‘Lu Wei Jie, I spared you your life back then, today, you must really put up a good show for me in return.’

“Senior Lu!” The other youths who had been thrown out with him stared worriedly at Lu Wei Jie. They were been accomplices to the crime and had been similarly victimised in this matter hence they naturally knew what Lu Wei Jie was about to say next!

“All of our futures have been ruined and how much longer do you want to hide the truth for that person!? All of you might be willing to be stepping stones for that person but not me! She was the one behind all of this, so why should we bear all the consequences! ? She is still safe and sound within the academy, enjoying the love and respect from all the disciples who are ignorant of the truth!” Lu Wei Jie scolded the others through tightly clenched teeth.

He was not about to go down without a fight.

The group of youths lowered their head, the sense of injustice in their hearts were suddenly sparked by Lu Wei Jie’s fiery words!

“Ning Xin! If you still have any conscience left in you, come out

here right this instant! You were overcome by your own greed and attempted to murder the disciples from the Cloud Treading Peak and the General of the Rui Lin Army! The attempt failed and you pushed all the blame onto us! In order for the Zephyr Academy to answer to the Cloud Treading Peak and the Rui Lin Army, they have dumped all responsibility for the matter on all of us here and thrown us out of the Zephyr Academy, making us bear all the blame! We have no other way out of this, while you are being absolved completely from the matter! Just because your father is the Vice Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy! Just because the Headmaster and your father are fellow disciples!” Lu Wei Jie was not going to hold back in the slightest. Since Ning Xin and Ning Rui were not giving them a way out of this, he didn’t see any need to hide anything!

Even if he would not be able to finish his academic studies, he was confident he would still succeed with his family’s strong connections!

Lu Wei Jie’s words stirred the crowd of disciples gathered before them!

What is this about the Cloud Treading Peak!? What is this about the Rui Lin Army..... The two names uttered endlessly thundered in the ears and stuck like lightning into the hearts of the disciples there!

Ning Xin plotted against those two powers!?

What really happened!!?

Fanned by Lu Wei Jie’s inflammatory words, the other youths who had been prepared to forgive and move on were suddenly acutely made aware of the discrepancy in the punishment meted out to Ning Xin and them. They grew angry and joined with Lu Wei Jie, spilling every single detail they knew about the incident that happened in the Battle Spirits Forest.

More than twenty youths chirped, one after another, as they

explained in detail, all that had gone on in their own words.

The real truth when revealed, had all the disciples tongue tied and staring in disbelief, their faces in shock!

Lu Wei Jie and Ning Xin were both well known and leading figures among the disciples of the Zephyr Academy. Although Lu Wei Jie was not as worshipped and loved like Ning Xin was, but he possessed great power and was an individual who won everyone's praise as a prodigious youth.

Both of them had enjoyed a rather good relationship with each other and all the disciples knew that they had been in the same team during the Spirit Hunt.

But now, everyone in that team had been thrown out together with Lu Wei Jie, but for the exception of Ning Xin and Yin Yan. The circumstances were already suspicious by itself and with Lu Wei Jie and the others' statements, a fiery debate suddenly erupted heatedly among all the disciples!

Nobody could easily accept the picture of the usually gentle and graceful Senior Ning they had in their minds could possibly be the very same person as the image of a greedy murderer who lusted for personal enrichment and was a despicable girl, who would betray her own fellow disciples, as described by Lu Wei Wei Jie and the group of twenty over youths before them.

Lu Wei Jie and the other youths grew angrier as they spoke and they went on to blast at Ning Rui and Fan Qi for the unjust and unequal way the matter had been handled.

"You think that you can use us to appease the rage of the Cloud Treading Peak and the Rui Lin Army!? I think you are making a very big mistake here! As brilliant as General Long is, he will never believe your one sided response. You just wait till the Rui Lin Army comes knocking upon these very gates!"

Chapter 526: “Sudden Affability (1)”

Lu Wei Jie had told Long Qi every single detail of the truth of the matter and if Ning Rui intended to use the fact that they had expelled more than twenty disciples to brush the whole matter aside, they would have to see if Long Qi believed them at all!

“I will state today that I, and the brothers with me here today, hereby cut all ties with the Zephyr Academy! With an academy that practises such fraud and cronyism, I, Lu Wei Jie, refuses to dance according to their whims! Today, I declare that it is not the case that the Zephyr Academy has thrown me and my brothers in arms here out, but that we choose not to remain in this place of filth and contamination!” Lu Wei Jie said resolutely and after he finished, he turned to leave without looking back once, refusing to look at the place for another moment.

All the other youths who had been expelled from the Zephyr Academy followed suit and left behind them countless questions and conjectures to rise within the disciples of the Zephyr Academy.

At that moment, the simmering pot that was the Zephyr Academy suddenly exploded as everyone started throwing their own versions and opinions on the matter into the overflowing pot.

While the tiny figure at the back, slipped away unnoticed, carrying her little black cat in her arms.

It seemed that Lu Wei Jie wasn't that dense after all. Instead of allowing the Zephyr Academy to fully pin the unequivocal blame of the matter onto him, he had chosen to reveal everything and left in an indignant rage of righteousness, cleansing off the accusations pinned on his back.

In that way, he might still have a sliver of a chance for his future with that gamble.

At least he understood what he stood to lose.

Jun Wu Xie faded away among the crowd as she left. She knew after today's events, no matter what Heaven defying abilities Ning Xin possessed, she would not be able to erase all the doubts and malicious guesses from the hearts of the disciples in the Zephyr Academy as it was a fact that she still remained there, while Lu Wei Jie and the other youths had been forced to leave.

The show was just beginning. Would Ning Xin be able to withstand what was about to come?

Very soon, the speech that Lu Wei Jie had given just before he left reached the ears of Ning Xin. She almost exploded with rage but she realised that Lu Wei Jie's actions were his last gamble, and a form of revenge against Ning Xin herself.

The rumours currently pervading the hallowed halls of the Zephyr Academy were that Ning Xin attempted to rob by murder and when it failed, she persecuted fellow disciples to escape.

Suddenly, Ning Xin's reputation fell from the clouds and was quickly trampled in mud!

Ning Xin did not even dare to leave her room then. She had already been deeply worried that Long Qi would not let the matter rest so easily and now Lu Wei Jie had stabbed her so badly causing the voices in the academy to rise in dissent. Many of the youths who had previously adored and worshipped her have now been turned by those swirling rumours and despised her to be a beautiful and vicious witch.

Ning Rui had wanted to help salvage Ning Xin's tattered reputation and got several disciples to spread rumours saying that Lu Wei Jie had failed in winning the heart of Ning Xin in his pursuit and had harboured hatred after being spurned. And when he was expelled for committing those heinous crimes, he had acted on that hatred and tried to smear Ning Xin as he left.

Those false rumours might have dampened the heat a little and led some easily manipulated disciples to believe them. But the

majority of the disciples were still doubtful and suspicious, and even when they did not debate the issue openly, the discussions that went on in private, however did not abate in the slightest.

Ning Xin was not able to maintain her image as the perfect Senior among the disciples anymore this time.

The glories of her past faded into oblivion, and if she dared to appear before the disciples of the Zephyr Academy, she would no longer be greeted by the looks of adulation and worship, but faced with eyes filled with mistrust and suspicion.

Although she had not been confronted with accusing fingers, but being forced to face such treatment, was hell for someone who was so used to having her every whim catered for. She sought endlessly for a way to get herself out of the predicament but she could not think up any suitable plans. She could only forced herself to put on a facade of calm and bury all the accusatory voices deep in her heart. But in private, she had smashed countless scores of ceramics and porcelains and shredded embroideries and tapestries in vent.

Lu Wei Jie, you've got guts!

Ning Xin clenched her jaws. She was unable to stop all the rumours and she still had to carry out the next step in their plans.

Early that morning, Ning Xin had painstakingly dressed herself up and hurried over to come to the quiet and tranquil little bamboo grove. After meticulously checking over her looks outside the doors, she finally knocked upon the main doors leading into the little bamboo grove.

.....

Chapter 527: “Sudden Affability (2)”

When Fan Zhuo opened the main doors in front of the yard, he was surprised a moment as he looked at the beautiful girl standing outside. His eyes flashed briefly with an unidentifiable emotion but it quickly disappeared.

“Little Xin?” Fan Zhuo looked puzzled, as his eyes fell on Ning Xin, a person he had not seen for a long time.

Although the two of them were betrothed to each other in marriage, Fan Zhuo’s declining health by the day had soon stopped anyone from bringing the topic up. In order for him to have a proper place to recuperate, Fan Zhuo had moved into the little bamboo grove and Ning Xin was seldom seen to appear at this place.

He remembered the last time Ning Xin came here was more than a year ago.

“Big brother Zhuo.” Ning Xin’s face lit up in an innocent sweet smile, looking like the pure and naive little girl next door, that made people warm up to her easily.

“Big Brother Zhuo, Little Xin has not come to see you in a rather long while, are you angry with Little Xin?”

Fan Zhuo smiled gently and said: “Not at all.”

Ning Xin looked apologetically at Fan Zhuo, her eyes lowered, her face filled with anguish.

“I was actually missing Big Brother Zhuo quite a lot but Father reminded me repeatedly that Big Brother Zhuo needed to rest and did not allow me to come disturb your rest. Hence, Little Xin had been holding herself back for so long and not come visit Big Brother Zhuo. Big Brother Zhuo, would you please forgive Little Xin?”

Fan Zhuo gave out a light laugh and shook his head good

naturedly.

The joyous smile quickly returned to Ning Xin's face and as she looked at Fan Zhuo, she made herself say meekly: "Little Xin prepared some glutinous rice cake for Big Brother Zhuo to eat. I remember that Big Brother Zhuo loved to eat it when we were younger." As she said those words, Ning Xin raised up her hand and shook the small intricate lunchbox she held in her hand.

Fan Zhuo's eyes lowered slightly just a brief moment and he raised his head back up quickly to look at Ning Xin and say gently: "Little Xin is so thoughtful. The sun out here is too strong, come in and have a cup of tea and rest a little."

Ning Xin nodded her head with a smile and followed Fan Zhuo into the little dwelling within the bamboo grove. The look of pure innocence and shy manners of a little girl had all disappeared completely the moment Fan Zhuo had turned his back as she stared at Fan Zhuo thin and skinny back, her eyes dangerously narrowed.

Fan Zhuo actually possessed outstanding looks and his character was just as exceptional, his failing was his ill health that did not allow him to achieve anything significant.

If Fan Zhuo was in good health, Ning Xin would be only too happy to be joined in conjugal union with such an outstanding young man. But Fan Zhuo's weak constitution had dragged him down and he had seemed to be always on his last breaths and who knew how soon his last breath would come. And if Fan Zhuo was dead, the Zephyr Academy's ownership would most probably fall into the hands of Fan Jin, and by that time, she had her father would not stand a chance anymore.

But.....

Ning Xin curled up the corners of her mouth. Fan Zhuo had his own usefulness as well, his pure heart that was free from worldly desires made him easy to manipulate.

In his heart, he must be still looking at her as the naive and innocent little girl from young.

Ning Xin recollected herself and composed her emotions, as she contemplated the situation at hand within the little bamboo grove. After Ah Jing was driven out, the little bamboo grove was left with only Fan Zhuo and Jun Xie in here, with Fan Jin making frequent appearances during meal times.

Fan Zhuo was here before her eyes, where was Jun Xie?

Ning Xin squinted her eyes to peer around, trying to locate her real target.

Just as she was deeply absorbed in her own thoughts, Fan Zhuo suddenly stopped in his tracks.

Ning Xin did not realise it and nearly walked into Fan Zhuo. She muttered something apologetically and raised her head. Suddenly, she saw a tiny figure standing on the steps right before the bamboo huts, looking directly at her with those piercingly cold eyes!

Ning Xin's heart jumped. Ever since the day she had witnessed the glorious battle where Jun Xie had fought the Guardian grade Spirit Beast, she had developed a sudden wariness and fear for the tiny youth that was younger than she was.

Those eyes on the youth, made her tremble involuntarily whenever she saw them now!

Chapter 528: “Sudden Affability (3)”

“Big Brother Zhuo, this is.....?” Ning Xin tried to calm herself, trying to look puzzled as she looked at Jun Xie.

Fan Zhuo said simply: “This is Jun Xie.”

And just that, seemingly having no intentions to introduce Jun Xie to Ning Xin.

Nevertheless, Ning Xin had amicably stepped forward herself and pasted her most perfect smile on her face to say: “So you are Jun Xie. I had heard that someone was staying here with Big Brother Zhuo and was feeling rather curious. I had thought that whoever Big Brother Zhuo chose to be friends with must undoubtedly be a nice person. And seeing you today has just confirmed my thoughts.”

Ning Xin’s voice was gentle and moving, her smile warm and sincere.

Jun Wu Xie was however unmoved and retorted bluntly: “Senior Ning must then be blind.”

She had a nice personality?

Yelp.

The smile on Ning Xin’s face froze. She had not expected Jun Xie to be so blunt with his first words to her.

Fan Zhuo did not seem to have noticed Ning Xin’s awkward predicament and said smilingly: “Little Xie’s personality is a little cold and does not like to mix with people. I hope Little Xin will not hold it against her.”

The way he put it might have sounded like he was helping Ning Xin to lift her out from embarrassment but he had in reality taken the cue from Jun Xie and slapped Ning Xin across the face.

She was able to tell that Jun Xie was nice just with one look? Jun

Xie might be right when he had said Ning Xin must be blind.

The corners of Ning Xin's mouth froze but fortunately for her, she was used to putting up a false front before others and she managed to hide her embarrassment rather well, as the smile on her face continued to shine.

“Nonsense, I still think Little Xie is a rather warm person.”

Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow slightly and said: “It seems that Senior Ning is not aware of my reputation among the people in the academy?”

The infamy of her name within the Zephyr Academy had spread to cover every corner and even Ah Jing who had previously resided within the detached little bamboo grove had heard about it, moreover for Ning Xin, who resides at the academy itself.

Clumsy acting, a fail!

Ning Xin had never spoken to Jun Xie before and she had thought that Jun Xie kept to himself because he was ostracised by all the others. And she had not expected that barely two sentences into their first conversation with each other, Ning Xin was suddenly feeling a stinging burn forming on her cheeks.

That little brat's words were all filled with thorns, and it pricked at her to no end!

Ning Xin drew in a deep breath and quickly tried to recall if she had ever crossed paths with Jun Xie before, but after trying her hardest, she had no recollection of anything like that. She finally concluded that Jun Xie must have known of Yin Yan's undeniable link to her and was hence so openly hostile to her now.

After she was able to ascertain the reason, Ning Xin was finally able to relax.

“Those unfounded rumours are not to be believed! Even now, hanging heavily over the Zephyr Academy are many vicious rumours about me. But the innocent knows they are innocent, and

those rumours are spread only to vindicate the good. Big Brother Zhuo must have known what kind of person you really are before he agreed to let you stay here and he knows me, that I would never believe them. Why should we allow ourselves to get upset over nothing?" In an attempt to draw Jun Xie closer to her, Ning Xin had even exposed her own predicament to him, hoping to win some sympathy from being in the same boat, to diffuse the hostility that Jun Xie held against her.

At the same time, she was trying to exonerate herself, when in the future if Jun Xie or Fan Zhuo were to hear anything about the vicious things being said about her in the academy, they would just treat them as baseless ramblings.

Ning Xin had always prided herself on her ability to cover all bases when she carried out her schemes, but little did she realise that she was no match for the nimble minded Jun Wu Xie this time.

Jun Wu Xie watched on as Ning Xin played out her role in her act, her eyes chilly with frost. "But what if they said were true?"

Ning Xin froze once more.

"I have never been a nice person." Jun Wu Xie was taking great delight in taking repeated digs at Ning Xin.

The game had only just started, she wanted to see how Ning Xin would squirm and writhe.

Ning Xin heaved a sigh of relief when she realised that Jun Xie was not talking about her but Jun Xie himself. But even before she could exhale that breath when she suddenly felt uncomfortably stifled and panicked. Who in the world debased themselves like that?

She had already said so many nice things to smoothen the whole situation yet Jun Xie was still unhesitatingly admitting that all that had been said about him was true. What did he expect her to

say in reply to that?

Chapter 529: “Sudden Affability (4)”

Ning Xin had always possessed the gift of the gab but when faced with Jun Xie’s unconventional way of speaking, she found herself at a loss and her mind suddenly went blank, not knowing what to say in reply.

Ning Xin suddenly felt that if she was to continue carrying on the conversation with Jun Xie, it would only make things worse. Jun Xie’s undisguised hostility must be due to him still holding grudges against Yin Yan. It seems that she would have to make Yin Yan come apologise to Jun Xie first.

After having decided on her next course of action, Ning Xin no longer persisted on making Jun Xie talk and decided to turn her attention back to Fan Zhuo, putting forth a bashful manner, showing deep concern for his well being, with a series of gentle words.

And Fan Zhuo’s well mannered personality, finally invited Ning Xin to stay longer for some tea.

Ning Xin quickly but unhurriedly took out the snacks that she had prepared, and had seemingly unconsciously prepared some for Jun Xie as well, discreetly trying to close the distance between them.

Jun Wu Xie sat on one side stoically, carrying the little black cat in her arms. Ning Xin’s sudden cordial and affable actions were seen to be a tad bit too obvious. She had stayed here at the little bamboo grove for quite a period but had never seen Ning Xin come anywhere close. And finally just after the Spirit Hunt had ended, she had so eagerly come to their doors, and her words and actions had taken on a stance of familiarity and proximity between them.

If Jun Wu Xie still could not see Ning Xin’s underlying intentions, she would have lived her two lives in vain.

And since someone had been so eager to come and asked to be made to feel uncomfortable, she saw no need to reject such an open invitation, right?

Jun Wu Xie picked up the snack and bit at it indifferently. When Ning Xin saw Jun Xie eat the snack, she allowed herself to relax a little.

Fan Zhuo was the most natural one among the three people there, seemingly oblivious to what was going on, and was just chatting with his housemate and his betrothed over tea.

Ning Xin patiently played along, while she secretly observed Jun Xie.

If it wasn't for the several purple spirit exponents behind Jun Xie, just the attitude that Jun Xie was taking towards her would be enough to make her flip the table before her and fall out with him.

But in that situation, Ning Xin could only clench her jaw tight and swallow the insult. Forced to maintain an amicable smile on her face, Ning Xin sat through the farce, having no other choice but to tolerate the intolerable tea session.

Ning Xin managed to endure it for almost half a day and could not make herself stay a moment longer. She forced herself to keep up the waning smile on her lips as she bade Fan Zhuo and Jun Xie goodbye. She hurried to escape from the overly stifling bamboo grove, not even bothering to retrieve the intricate lunchbox. Although the rage was threatening to spill out within her as she left, she forced a smile on her face and promised to come visit again soon.

After Ning Xin had left, Fan Zhuo suddenly put down the snack he held in his hand and raised his head, to look at Jun Xie smilingly.

“Little Xie, do you like these snacks?”

Jun Wu Xie replied: “Don't mind them.”

“If you don’t really like them, then don’t eat it.” Fan Zhuo stretched out his hand as he spoke and took the half eaten piece of snack that Jun Xie held in his hand, to throw it into the lunchbox. He closed the lid tightly and brought it to the kitchen and threw it into a corner. He then brought out some chestnut cake and offered them to Jun Xie for them to share.

Jun Wu Xie observed Fan Zhuo’s actions silently and an odd idea came into her head. She looked at Fan Zhuo’s gentle featured face as the chestnut cake melted in her mouth to flow down her throat.

“You do not like her?” Jun Wu Xie asked suddenly.

Fan Zhuo was rather taken aback, but he said with a laugh: “She’s no good, Little Xie, you should avoid having any contact with her.”

Jun Wu Xie stared at the unlucky youth who had been born inherently weak and with a gentle disposition. She stared for a long while and when saw that the gentle smile on Fan Zhuo’s face still did not fade, she finally turned back, but still did not give Fan Zhuo a reply.

That same evening, as the dark night fell, Fan Zhuo got up. Dressed in his inner robe, he came to the kitchen and lit up the fire in the stove, before he threw the lunchbox into the roaring fire.

Within the flames, a crisp crackling sounded and the red glow from the fire reflected off Fan Zhuo’s handsome countenance. The face bathed in the fire’s light did not show a single trace of its usual gentleness or amicable smile. In that pair of clear eyes, a malicious cold chill shone brilliantly against the warm glow from the fire.

Chapter 530: “Planting the Dove in a Magpie’s Nest (1)”

“What? Ning Xin came to visit?” In the afternoon the next day, Fan Jin had appeared once again to sponge off a meal and he heard from Fan Zhuo that Ning Xin had dropped in to visit him. The sudden news had given Fan Jin quite a rude shock.

If it had been before the Spirit Hunt, that Ning Xin had come to see Fan Zhuo, Fan Jin would have fully welcomed the kind gesture without a moment’s hesitation. But after all that had happened, Fan Jin’s heart was now filled with deep distrust for Ning Xin.

When Nangong Xu got back to the Zephyr Academy, he had reported everything he knew to Fan Qi. But Fan Jin had hidden the details of the assassination attempt on his life completely from him.

For no other reason than the fact that telling his father about the incident would be equivalent to cutting off all ties with Ning Xin. They had grown up together after all and Fan Jin took it as the last time that he would tolerate Ning Xin.

“Yup. Little Xin even brought me my favourite glutinous rice cakes.” Fan Zhuo said with a laugh.

Fan Jin’s expression grew grave. “Little Xie, how is Little Zhuo’s condition recently?” When he recalled the attempt made on his life, Fan Jin asked, his face frowning in worry.

Jun Wu Xie glanced at Fan Jin and carrying both Lord Meh Meh and the little black cat, she said softly: “Good.”

Fan Jin gave a big heavy sigh of relief.

“Big brother. Did you guys happen to meet with any odd or novel encounters in the Battle Spirits Forest?” Fan Zhuo asked with a smile, his eyes fixed on the two tiny furballs in Jun Wu Xie’s arms.

Unlike the little black cat, Lord Meh Meh totally ignored Fan Zhuo. Even when Fan Zhuo coaxed endlessly and tried everything he could to win its favour, he always still ended up facing into the furry buttocks, failing miserably.

Fan Jin was caught by surprise at the question and he averted his eyes, before bringing up something inconsequential.

Fan Jin never shared those tiresome matters with Fan Zhuo as he always wanted Fan Zhuo to be able recuperate in peace.

“If I manage to recover properly, I will love to go to the Battle Spirits Academy to take a look.” Fan Zhuo was feeling a little wistful. Due to his ill health, he had almost never stepped out of the Zephyr Academy before, and he longed achingly to see the world beyond the academy.

Now, under Jun Xie’s meticulous nursing, his health had gradually improved day by day. The sights that he had never dared dreamed to see, started to tug and pull at his heartstrings.

The majestic mountains, the meandering rivers, the wonders of nature. He yearned to be free, to see those sights.

When he saw the longing in those eyes, Fan Jin could feel his heart wince in pain. He forced himself to put up a smile and joked a little, trying to cheer Fan Zhuo up, and the whole meal was filled with laughter.

Seeing Fan Zhuo significantly cheered, Fan Jin finally got back his appetite. And he had just picked up his chopsticks when Jun Xie hit them out of his hand, and they clattered loudly on the floor.

“It’s drugged.” Jun Wu Xie narrowed her eyes.

Fan Jin’s expression froze.

The smile faded from Fan Zhuo’s face.

“They used the same things as before. Are they not capable of anything else?” Jun Wu Xie stood up and dropped the whole table

of food outside.

Ever since Ah Jing had been driven out, all the three meals at the bamboo grove were prepared and delivered by Fan Qi's trusted aide. The meals for Fan Zhuo were all medicinal cuisine prepared by Jun Wu Xie and the food sent here usually ended up in Fan Jin's tummy.

“How did that happen? After I came back, I paid attention to the food that was sent here and saw that there were all prepared in my father's personal kitchen before they were delivered here.” Fan Jin said, his face dark.

All the people working in Fan Qi's living quarters, had all been with them for a long time and were absolutely loyal. So how did the fortification medicine get into the food! ?

Who was the person behind it?

“Father would never harm me, so it has to be someone from Father's personal staff.” Fan Zhuo said, his eyes narrowed.

“Little Zhuo's meals are all prepared by Uncle Gong personally and no one else would touch it.” Fan Jin said as he pondered the facts repeatedly in his mind. Due to Fan Zhuo's ill health, they were all very careful with whatever Fan Zhuo ate.

Chapter 531: “Planting the Dove in a Magpie’s Nest (2)”

They had been fearful that the food for his meals would clash with the properties of the medicines and had specially arranged for Fan Qi’s trusted aide Gong Cheng Lei to take personal charge of it. From preparation to delivery, Gong Cheng Lei completed the whole process alone, and no one else would have a hand in it.

Gong Cheng Lei was a man whom Fan Qi saved when he was out on one of his trips. They were both just youths then and Fan Qi was still a disciple under his Master’s tutelage. Since then, Gong Cheng Lei had followed Fan Qi. Over the decades, Gong Cheng Lei had shown himself to be unwavering loyal and had never exhibited a single sign of betrayal.

Fan Jin was most willing to begin to doubt the Uncle who had watched him grow up.

“It might not be him, if someone really wanted to, even the seasonings used can be suspect.” Jun Wu Xie said.

Fan Jin considered all the possibilities but could not come up with anyone else.

Jun Wu Xie continued to stare at Fan Jin, her eyes sparkling clear.

She had a person in mind that she suspected to be the culprit and Fan Jin should be able to identify this person as well, but he seemed still to be lost.

Emotions always has a way of clouding a person’s judgement.

Jun Wu Xie sipped at her tea, thinking whether she should reveal her suspicion to the blockhead in front of her.

“Big Brother.” Fan Zhuo suddenly opened his mouth to say.

“What is it?”

“Over this period, has Father been dining together with Uncle Ning?” Fan Zhuo asked Fan Jin curiously.

Fan Jin nodded and replied easily: “Uncle Ning has not changed his habit of dining with Father all these years. Father has always said that they had been doing that since they had been fellow disciples under their Master. It must be said that the relationship between them is rather close, and Father is always thinking of drawing the two families closer by.....”

As he went on further exhorting on their close relations, Fan Jin suddenly stopped and clamped his mouth shut. His eyes widened and he turned to stare at Fan Zhuo, flabbergasted.

Jun Wu Xie lowered her eyes then, and the corners of her mouth curled up.

It seemed that Fan Zhuo was a little bit more intelligent than his brother.

“I..... I forgot I have something I needed to do. You guys carry on!” Fan Jin suddenly stood up. Fan Zhuo’s words had struck him like a lightning bolt, and cleared up the fog that had so badly clouded his mind.

He had always thought of the culprit as someone who held grudges against the Fan Family. But he suddenly realised that that might not be the case.

In the Battle Spirits Forest, when Ning Xin had tried to kill him, it had planted a seed of uneasiness in him. And Fan Zhuo’s words had suddenly caused that seed to sprout.

There were not many people who were allowed access into Fan Qi’s living quarters. And even less people were able to go into the his personal kitchen. Besides Gong Cheng Lei and Fan Jin, the only other possibility was the person who ate with Fan Qi. Only Ning Rui could possibly have done it!

Since Ning Xin had attempted to get him killed, would Ning Rui

be doing it to Fan Zhuo?

Fan Jin did not dare carry on further with that line of thought. He needed to go find Gong Cheng Lei and clarify a few things in detail, to gather a few more clues before he could be sure!

Fan Jin left the bamboo grove in a big hurry, his face ominously darkened. There wasn't a moment more to lose!

For Ning Xin's attempt on his life, he had been willing to forget it and scrub the slate clean. But if the father and daughter pair had their sights on doing the same thing to Fan Zhuo, he would never let them off!

As he stared after Fan Jin's sudden and hurried departure, a slight tinge of a bitter smile appeared on Fan Zhuo's face as he lowered his head to continue to eat the medicinal cuisine in his bowl.

"Since you have known it all this time, why did you wait until now to say it?" Jun Wu Xie put Lord Meh Meh and the little black cat on the table, her chin rested in her palm, staring at the completely unaffected Fan Zhuo.

Chapter 532: “Planting the Dove in a Magpie’s Nest (3)”

Fan Zhuo’s hand that was holding his spoon froze, and his frail body straightened. He did not lift up his head, but remained silent for a while before he said, his voice sounding a little choked up: “What can I do even if I said it to them? Without proof, my father and brother would never believe it. And if word reached that person’s ears, it would only result in that person becoming more anxious to get rid of me. Wouldn’t it be better if I keep myself alive a little longer and await a miracle to happen?”

Fan Zhuo’s tone of voice was not as carefree as he usually sounded. The repressed and choked up voice made one sad just to hear it.

“Fan Qi trusts that person so much?” Jun Wu Xie asked, an eyebrow raised.

“That person saved his life once, and my father had always put that person’s interest before his own ever since. I knew from long ago that someone was trying to get rid of me, but I did not know where it was coming from. There were no signs, and no proof. Father would not believe it just based on my words alone.” Fan Zhuo finally raised his head. His handsome features did not show his usual gentle smile. In its place, was a chilly countenance, his eyes cold and sharp, with a glint like light on cold hard blades.

If he was not confident of defeating his enemy in one stroke, he would not make his move, to not alert his enemy whereby he might be quickly silenced.

“Why then, are you making your move now?” Jun Wu Xie asked.

Fan Zhuo stared at Jun Xie, as his dark countenance suddenly brightened to burst into a gentle and brilliant smile.

“Because I have Little Xie here.”

Jun Wu Xie blinked.

“From the moment Little Xie came into contact with my brother, you have been used as a pawn to smear and damage my brother’s reputation. With your character, you would never allow the culprits to get away with it. I knew you would retaliate one day, and the day you make your move, will also be the day that I would be freed.” Fan Zhuo’s smile was shining brilliantly. The appearance of Jun Wu Xie had allowed him to see a glimmer of hope, hope that one day, he would no longer need to live by hiding.

“You are more intelligent than your brother.” Jun Wu Xie stared at Fan Zhuo. She did not believe that Fan Zhuo would just await his death all this while. He must have something up his sleeve. But his plan must have needed a long time to prepare for and her appearance had just brought everything forward.

“My brother is too kind and a little naive. He always tried to see the good in people. If he does not witness it for himself, he would never believe it, and just brush it off as a misunderstanding.” Fan Zhuo shrugged his shoulders. His brother’s character, he only knew it too well.

“If Ning Xin knows that you stand a chance to fully recover, perhaps she might no longer seek your death.” Jun Wu Xie said calmly.

What the Ning father and daughter sought, they would be able to receive from Fan Zhuo.

Fan Zhuo’s smile did not change a single bit.

“And if, I am not the real heir?”

Jun Wu Xie was shocked.

Fan Zhuo stood up, pushing the medicinal cuisine that had turned cold away from him.

“If my real identity was a case of planting the dove in the magpie’s nest, and Fan Jin is actually from the Fan Family’s

bloodline, would they still think the same?”

Jun Wu Xie's eyebrow raised up high. She was hearing some interesting news.

Fan Zhuo's eyes were still on Jun Wu Xie, and the smile in his eyes were deepening.

“Father and Big Brother are both very good people. Without them, I would no longer exist in this world. Planting the dove in the magpie's nest was solely in return for a favour they received. After the matter with the Ning Family is fully resolved, this privileged identity of being the legitimate son of the Headmaster's must naturally be returned.”

Hence, that fact that he would put up with everything in silence, was in consideration for the feelings of the Fan father and son, in repayment for their selfless act of benevolence.

Jun Wu Xie tilted her head and stared at Fan Zhuo. It would seem that before Fan Zhuo met her, he had already given up all hope of surviving through it. He must have known his body would not be able to drag on much longer and was trying his best to come up with ways to let the Fan father and son detect the malicious intentions of the Ning father and daughter.

Using his own limited lifespan in repayment for bringing him up.

This youth, was rather interesting.

Chapter 533: “Seeking Torment, In a Pair (1)”

Fan Jin found Gong Cheng Lei very quickly, and the answers he got from him, left him in a state of shock.

He gathered that Ning Rui had been helping Fan Qi to source out tonics suitable for recuperation for many years and Ning Rui had frequently visited Fan Qi's personal kitchen. When he thought back to Jun Wu Xie's guess, Fan Jin had to seriously consider that possibility no matter how much he hated to.

Ning Xin had masterminded an attempt on his life, and her father could very possibly be the very culprit to have drugged Fan Zhuo's meals to kill him.

Fan Jin was greatly shocked and heavily devastated. He could not make himself imagine that the two people he had trusted so much all this time and treated almost like family members would deliberately plot to kill him and Fan Zhuo.

With a numbed and heavy heart, Fan Jin brought and shared his findings with Jun Xie and Fan Zhuo before he left with heavy steps.

He needed time, to digest all that he had found out today.

“The shock must have hit my brother quite hard this time.” Fan Zhuo sighed and lamented as he saw the downcast figure of his brother as he walked away into the distance.

Jun Wu Xie was sitting off one end of the bamboo bench in the yard of the bamboo grove and Lord Meh Meh was happily chomping up the fresh green grass around her feet.

“A time will always come, when you have to wake up from your dream.” Jun Wu Xie said, cradling the little black cat in her arms.

Fan Jin's character had always been like this. He tended to

beautify everything around him. And because of that, he was always brimming with enthusiasm and even when all the rumours about Jun Xie had dragged his name into the mud, he had not cared a whittle and still fiercely defended Jun Xie.

That character trait was both good to have, and bad to possess.

In days of peace, people like that would be greatly revered, but when faced in situations when one was surrounded by danger, they were most easily killed.

“What should my brother do from here on? My father’s character is exactly the same as his. Unless he is convinced himself of the suspicions, even if my brother and I tell it to him, he would not suspect his own fellow disciple.” Fan Zhuo found a spot under the shade to sit down, feeling rather helpless on how to handle the Fan father and son. If not for their overly trusting nature, they would have discovered the Ning father and daughter’s scheme much earlier.

“We wait and see.” Jun Wu Xie did not intend to interfere much.

It did not matter to her how the Fan father and son reacted, she decided as long as she knew what she needed to do, that was enough.

Fan Zhuo smiled, and as he stared at the hot noon sun, his heart warmed.

When Ning Xin appeared once again at the little bamboo grove, the smile was still on Fan Zhuo’s face, as his smiling eyes fell on the figure of a youth standing behind Ning Xin.

“Big Brother Zhuo. This is Yin Yan from the Spirit Healer faculty. He was roommates with Little Xie previously and he sort of misses Little Xie after having not seen him for such a long period and so I brought him along with me. Hope we are not imposing on you much.” Ning Xin exclaimed, smiling extra sweetly. After being snubbed the last time, she had needed two days to recover before

she was able to make herself come here once again.

This time, she had brought along Yin Yan, and she was very clear what she wanted to achieve here today.

Fan Zhuo smiled good naturedly but Yin Yan's face took on a rather dark expression as his eyes stared piercingly at Fan Zhuo, the enmity in them obvious.

Ning Xin betrothal to Fan Zhuo had happened quite some time ago and word of it had leaked into the Zephyr Academy. But as Ning Xin had very rarely interacted with Fan Zhuo, the matter of the betrothal had slowly faded and almost forgotten. Yin Yan had admired Ning Xin for a long time now and had been earnestly hoping to win the beauty's heart. But now, he had actually been brought all the way here to see Fan Zhuo, which tore at his heart mercilessly, and he really could not find it within himself to smile at the person before him.

His eyes surveyed Fan Zhuo up and down, and a mocking laugh sounded in his heart.

So what is he the son of the Headmaster? He is still a piece of useless trash that already has a foot in Death's door. A guy who is about to die anytime, cannot be worthy of Ning Xin in anyway!

He completely disregarded Fan Zhuo in his heart, and his face did not show much respect either. His disdain showed outwardly undisguised, and he deemed Fan Zhuo to be beneath his notice.

Chapter 534: “Seeking Torment, In a Pair (2)”

Fan Zhuo was just as cordial as he always was, as if he was totally oblivious to Yin Yan’s uncivil behavior and he courteously invited the two of them in for tea.

Ning Xin sat for a while but when she saw no sign of Jun Xie, she began to grow anxious and said: “Why isn’t Little Xie here?”

Fan Zhuo replied easily: “I think he should be in his room.”

“Little Xie seems to like peace and quiet. Little Yan stayed together with Little Xie for a period before, he must have missed Little Xie after so long.” Ning Xin said smilingly as she looked at Yin Yan. Yin Yan’s expression froze, he was extremely reluctant, but when he remembered Ning Xin’s earlier orders, he had no choice but to mutter noncommittally:

“Mmm.”

He had never lived under the same roof with Jun Xie before. The first night that Jun Xie was admitted into the academy, Yin Yan had not gone back to the dorms. And when he got back, Jun Xie had already moved out.

It could be said besides the first time they met, Yin Yan had never seen Jun Xie in the dormitory again.

Fan Zhuo only laughed and did not say anything in reply.

Ning Xin tried all ways and means in various attempts to make Fan Zhuo invite Jun Xie over but Fan Zhuo didn’t seem to get the hint and only smiled at her and spoke about everything else except for Jun Xie.

Ning Xin was getting more and more anxious but she did not dare make her intentions too clear and abrupt.

It was even more infuriating for Yin Yan. He was forced to

witness Ning Xin defer gently to Fan Zhuo and spoke in a soft demure voice, in an intimate manner, which shattered Yin Yan's heart to pieces.

It was only after many hours that Jun Wu Xie finally appeared, and Ning Xin and Yin Yan felt a sudden wave of relief wash over them.

"Little Xie." Once Ning Xin saw Jun Xie, she immediately put on her best smile and discreetly prodded Yin Yan on his arm. Yin Yan's expression was rather stony when he saw Jun Xie. His mind was suddenly filled with the scene that he witnessed in the Battle Spirits Forest that day and his mouth felt to have been sealed tight, his lips turning purple.

Jun Wu Xie glanced once at Ning Xin very briefly and proceeded to walk over to a chair on one side to take a seat. Lord Meh Meh's hooves tapped on the ground as it followed obediently behind her and when it saw Ning Xin and Yin Yan, its tiny body suddenly stopped.

It remembered that youth, it had disturbed its rest just the other day.

"Meh!"

[Feedtress! Bad people here!]

Yin Yan's face darkened as he looked at the tiny sheep staring angrily at him, and a twitch started to tug at a corner of his mouth. "So this is the Spirit Beast that Little Xie brought back from the Battle Spirits Forest? It's..... rather cute."

As he could not find himself liking Jun Xie a single bit, Yin Yan grabbed at any topic at hand to attempt to strike up a conversation.

"Little Meh, come." Jun Wu Xie did not even bother to look at Yin Yan and waved at Lord Meh Meh. Lord Meh Meh's hooves tapped on the ground once again and stopped beside Jun Wu Xie's feet. Jun Wu Xie reached down and carried the tiny sheep into her

arms and the sheep continued to stare angrily at Yin Yan.

[Bad egg! Eat you up!]

“Ahem, Little Xie, when do you intend to come back to the dormitories?” Yin Yan was sitting on pins as he had been rather badly shocked by the scene in the Battle Spirits Forest. He no longer dared to act rashly before Jun Xie now.

Jun Wu Xie lifted her eyes and watched Yin Yan squirm under her stare but he was still trying to appear enthusiastic. After a while, Jun Wu Xie finally said:

“Who are you?”

Yin Yan stony expression turned green upon hearing Jun Xie’s words.

Ning Xin was suddenly taken aback. She had not expected Jun Xie not to know Yin Yan.

How was that possible!?

Hadn’t Jun Xie been snubbing her because of Yin Yan all this while? Why was Jun Xie looking like he did not know Yin Yan at all?

“Little Xie, don’t you recognize Yin Yan? He shared the same room with you in the dormitories before you know?” Ning Xin prompted gently with a smile, as she carefully observed Jun Xie’s reaction.

Chapter 535: “Seeking Torment, In a Pair (3)”

“Little Xie, don’t you remember Yin Yan? The two of you had lived under the same roof before.” Ning Xin said with an uncomfortable laugh, carefully observing Jun Xie’s reaction.

“No.” Jun Wu Xie replied, without even lifting her head.

Yin Yan felt his a burning sensation forming on his cheeks. Ning Xin had just been telling Fan Zhuo how close he was to Jun Xie and in just the next moment, Jun Xie was saying he did not even know him. The slap that came with that snub immediately crushed the courage that Yin Yan had worked so hard to summon up to come here.

At that moment, Yin Yan and Ning Xin wished the floor would just swallow them up. They had been so sure that Jun Xie’s hostility towards them had been because of Yin Yan but from the way things were looking, that was not the case at all.

And Yin Yan had been trying so hard to convince himself that he must realise and submit himself to the circumstances and bow down to Jun Xie for the moment.

However, he had not expected himself to be so far beneath Jun Xie’s notice and was a person he did not even remember.

Silence suddenly pervaded the bamboo hut. Yin Yan’s head hung low in humiliation and the smile on Ning Xin’s face was frozen as the two of them squirmed under the deafening silence.

Fan Zhuo was sitting on the side and he did not seem to have noticed the predicament the two visitors were in as he asked in perplexed consternation: “You don’t recognise him? That couldn’t be, Ning Xin was telling me that you and Yin Yan enjoy a rather close relationship and he came all the way here to see you as he missed you terribly. Little Xie, you must really think hard, and do

not dismiss it so trivially.”

Fan Zhuo’s voice was gentle, his expression concerned and caring.

However, both Ning Xin and Yin Yan would rather he not say anything at that moment!

If Fan Zhuo had not said all that, Jun Xie would not have known about their intentions. But since Fan Zhuo had said it, Jun Xie would naturally realise that the two of them had shamelessly come trying to establish a relationship with him and failed miserably, getting themselves badly snubbed.

At that moment, all traces of her smile disappeared from Ning Xin’s face. She saw that Jun Xie was staring at her with a gaze that made her feel extremely uncomfortable and under that gaze, she felt as if her pretenses were being peeled off layer by layer, making her feel rather unsettled.

The seat under her grew uncomfortable and all the words she had prepared so carefully died within her. Jun Xie’s single cold “No” had thrown all her plans into disarray.

She didn’t know how to carry on with the act.

To make things worse, Fan Zhuo had brought the matter up which had made Ning Xin greatly humiliated.

This time, Ning Xin could not stay seated there a moment longer. Her back stiffened and she suddenly stood up, her face a pale mask as she hurriedly bade farewell and took her leave, hastening her way out. She did not even bother to say anything about seeing them again this time.

Yin Yan followed quickly behind her without a word running out of the bamboo hut as if chased by a ferocious beast.

Only after the two had left, Fan Zhuo suddenly broke out into laughter, unable to hold himself back anymore.

“Ning Xin must be getting anxious. She doesn’t seem to be able to hold back anymore. I would have thought that she would be struggling a little while more but she seems to have reached her limit today.” Fan Zhuo swirled the tea in his teacup, as his smile began to reach his eyes.

As they had grown up together from a young age, he naturally knew Ning Xin’s character only too well. She might seem gentle and adorable on the outside, but on the inside she possessed a very high sense of self esteem, and was extremely self absorbed. Jun Xie’s repeated and unrestrained slaps to her face must really have driven Ning Xin almost to madness.

Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow. She did not feel that she had said anything harsh.

“Since they came to us asking for torment, shouldn’t I grant them their wish?”

She had not even made her move and Ning Xin had been so eager to come to their door asking to be tormented, why should she refuse them?

Fan Zhuo laughed lightly, and rested his chin in his palm, as he stared at Jun Xie with his head tilted.

“I am getting really curious what really happened in the Battle Spirits Forest that it can make such a conceited and self centred person to discard her pride and come try win you over. I could sense the extremely strong hatred she had for you but she suppressed and hid her rage as she put on an amicable smile in front of you. I am guessing there is something she needs from you?”

Chapter 536: “Seeking Torment, In a Pair (4)”

Jun Wu Xie stared at Fan Zhuo and she had to admit that Fan Zhuo had a brain that was much more intelligent than his blockhead of a brother's. He had not needed any prompting to be able to see and understand the whole situation clearly.

“But she isn't that dense either, after having been snubbed so unceremoniously two times in a row by you, I'm sure she would have understood by now that she would not be getting what she is seeking from you.” Fan Zhuo said as if talking to himself, but having gotten used to Jun Xie's usual silence, he wasn't feeling too bothered about it.

“She might just be a little intelligent, but do not forget that she still has a old and crafty father. If they are not able to gain what they seek from the target, they will plot to get rid of it altogether. Please be a bit more careful of everything around you.”

“I know.” Jun Wu Xie nodded slightly. She wasn't fearful that Ning Rui would make his move, but she was afraid that he would hold back and that would make it a lot less fun.

“My body has been feeling much better recently and if Little Xie doesn't have too much on his hands to do in the academy, would you accompany me out on a short trip?” Fan Zhuo asked, pushing the other issues away from his mind.

“Where?”

“Auction house.”

Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow. She had intended to make a trip to the auction house. When they had been in the Battle Spirits Forest, she had amassed quite a load of spirit stones with Qiao Chu and the others and had been looking for an opportunity to go to the auction house to sell them, but had not found a chance to do it.

Fan Zhuo's suggestion had suddenly reminded her about it.

"I have something I need to buy, would you accompany me? You should know, with my body in this condition, my father and brother would not readily allow me to go out alone. And if we allow them to arrange for escorts, they will surely be overprotective and make it meaningless for me by having a whole bunch of people to watch my every move. But if you are with me, Father and my brother would be a lot less worried." Fan Zhuo gave Jun Xie an extremely gentle smile. Over this period, after seeing that he had shown great improvements in his recuperation, Fan Qi had been more left more assured or he would have arranged for another person to come look after Fan Zhuo after Ah Jing was driven away.

Because Fan Zhuo's health had dramatically improved, Fan Qi had begun to trust in Jun Xie's skills in Medicine a little and even though the two of them had never met, Fan Qi was full of praise for Jun Xie.

"For your trip, having me alone with you might not be adequate." Jun Wu Xie did not immediately give Fan Zhuo a straight answer. Although the Fan father and son believed that Jun Xie could completely heal Fan Zhuo, they still would be allow him to bring Fan Zhuo out galavanting alone.

It might be easy to convince Fan Jin as he had witnessed Jun Wu Xie's powers in the Battle Spirits Forest and might not be too worried, but Fan Qi would surely be a lot harder to convince.

Just as Fan Zhuo was thinking that Jun Xie was about to reject him, Jun Wu Xie suddenly said: "I have a few companions. If we invite them along, it should then be alright."

The smile on Fan Zhuo's face widened.

"Little Xie has companions here? If they are willing, it would naturally be for the best."

Fan Zhuo was feeling a tad bit curious what kind of people the companions that Jun Xie was talking about were. Over this period where they had interacted with each other here in the bamboo grove, he knew Jun Xie had a very cold personality and seldom initiated contact with anyone. Jun Xie would only speak a little more to the two Fan brothers within the whole Zephyr Academy and for anyone else who might have tried, they would have ended up in a situation not too different from Ning Xin and Yin Yan.

“They will be willing.” Jun Wu Xie replied calmly.

If her memory served her correctly, Qiao Chu was the one who had pestered her to go to the auction house to net them some gold and this would seem like the perfect opportunity.

Fan Zhuo was discussing with Jun Wu Xie on their plan to go to the auction house here while on the other side, Ning Xin’s face was thunderously dark as she hurried out of the little bamboo grove and Yin Yan who was following obediently behind her was so frightened by the look on Ning Xin’s face that he did not dare utter a single sound.

When they reached a place where there was nobody around, Ning Xin could contain her rage no longer!

“That arrogant scoundrel! If he did not have those purple spirit exponents behind him, he would be nothing before me!”

Chapter 537: “Seeking Torment, In a Pair (5)”

“That arrogant scoundrel! If he did not have those purple spirit exponents behind him, he would be nothing before me!”

Ning Xin was on the verge of exploding in rage, if she had not seen with her own eyes that had the support of those purple spirit leveled exponents, she would never condescended herself to come try to win the favour of such a nobody like Jun Xie. And what infuriated her further was that Jun Xie was not only not showing humble gratitude, but was not even reciprocating the generous gesture. She had not once, but twice rebuffed her, totally embarrassing and humiliating her. It had left the highly arrogant Ning Xin, visibly trembling with rage.

Yin Yan was surprised to see it and he hurried forward to appease her. “Senior Ning, you need not be bothered by such an imbecile who doesn’t know what’s good for him. I see him as a weirdo and he acts peculiarly, making people extremely uncomfortable around him. Since he doesn’t know a good thing when he sees it, Senior Ning shouldn’t go look him up anymore.”

To be honest, Yin Yan was afraid of Jun Xie. Whenever he thought back to the scene in the Battle Spirits Forest, he would still shiver in fright.

If Ning Xin had not asked, he would never want to associate himself with Jun Xie ever again.

Now that Jun Xie had embarrassed Ning Xin repeatedly, Yin Yan jumped at the chance to attempt to kill any other intentions Ning Xin might still be holding against Jun Xie and distance himself from the cold and callous Jun Xie.

Ning Xin clenched her jaw. “You think I like doing it? It was all for my father! If we leave Jun Xie alone, he would only be further

entrenched in his support for Fan Jin. And at this moment, the slander against me within the academy is still increasing! If it is allowed to go on, Fan Jin would not have to lift a finger and everyone will begin to despise me and forget everything about him in the past. His reputation will once again rise to become the Senior Fan that everyone respects and adores! All the efforts that we have put in will have been in vain!”

The hatred in her heart made her wish she could crush Jun Xie’s bones and scatter his ashes but she knew she had no choice but to swallow all the humiliation thrown upon her.

If not for those purple spirit exponents, she wouldn’t have to bother herself with such trash, like Jun Xie.

Yin Yan gulped. When Fan Jin’s name was brought up, the hatred that had been forgotten with his fear suddenly rushed back up to the surface.

Ning Xin drew in a deep breath, trying to diffuse the malice showing on her face.

“If he chose to reject the olive branch offered to him, he must be prepared to suffer my wrath. Since Jun Xie does not know what’s good for him, I will soon make him realise how advantageous it would be for him to have me, Ning Xin, as a friend! At that time, he will finally know the right choice to make when choosing friends.”

Winning Jun Xie over was a mission that she must complete. No matter how much Ning Xin hated him, she had no choice but to put up with it. And after she has established a link with the purple spirit exponents through Jun Xie, she did not believe, with her respected identity and intelligent mind, she would not be able to win the exponents over.

If Jun Xie, with his unlikable personality was able to win the support of that group of exponents, she would naturally be able to do better!

“Senior Ning, what do you plan to do?” Yin Yan asked cautiously.

Ning Xin gave him a cold laugh. “Recently, because of Lu Wei Jie and his band, the Zephyr Academy was caught up in another storm, making everyone forget about Jun Xie’s misdeeds. People are always so forgetful, and it is time someone reminded all the disciples of Jun Xie’s various past misdeeds. If I am not wrong, Li Zi Mu had lost his life in the Battle Spirits Forest in the recent Spirit Hunt, and the senior that had accompanied him had said that before Li Zi Mu died, he had defected to Fan Jin’s team. You tell me, Fan Jin had been able to protect Jun Xie and even those disciples from the branch division so well, why had Li Zi Mu been the only one to lose his life? I fear that Jun Xie had acted on his hatred and it had resulted in such a tragedy..... Don’t you think so? Hahaha.....”

Ning Xin shared her scheme with her hand over her mouth, and she broke out into malicious laughter as her eyes narrowed, shining in sinister conspiracy.

“When he is overwhelmed and crushed down by the mountain of curses and insults, that will be the time I reach out my hand, offering to save him from the inescapable predicament. Won’t he be eternally grateful to me then?”

Jun Xie, since you have so bluntly snubbed me, do not blame me for the harsh treatment then!

Chapter 538: “Chan Lin Town (1)”

Fan Zhuo sought Fan Jin out and told him that he would be going out on a trip with Jun Xie. Fan Jin had remained silent a moment and after his moment of hesitation, Jun Xie said something that freed Fan Jin of all his worries.

For the trip, it won't only be Fan Zhuo and Jun Xie, but they would also be accompanied by Qiao Chu and his gang.

Having seen for himself the astounding powers of Qiao Chu and his companions, Fan Jin was undoubtedly assured of their protection. But the branch division was still a distance away from the main division and it would pose a bit of difficulty for Jun Xie to pass the word to Qiao Chu and the others. The task had inevitably fallen onto Fan Jin to carry it out.

As the son of the Headmaster, it would be easy for him to go to the branch division and request for a few disciples from them.

That task was done that very afternoon and he even arranged for horse drawn carriages for them, reminding them to be careful on their trip.

The nearest auction house from the Zephyr Academy was a half day's journey away. Coinciding with the end of the month, after the disciples of the Zephyr Academy had survived through the exhausting trials in the Battle Spirits Forest, they were rewarded with five days off. During that period, some of the disciples might choose to recuperate and recover themselves by staying in the academy while others would choose to gather in groups, making their way to the towns close to the Zephyr Academy for some rest and relaxation.

The most prosperous town, bustling with activity, in the vicinity of the Zephyr Academy was Chan Lin Town.

Chan Lin had been a small little town, relatively unknown. And it

was due to its proximity to the Zephyr Academy that it had gradually grown and expanded, making the once small town fabulously prosperous. The fees for the Zephyr Academy were exorbitant and all their disciples were from rich and powerful families. The merchants had accurately eyed this business opportunity and flocked to Chan Lin Town, causing the once inconspicuous small town, to forcibly expand into the most busy and flourishing place to be in that area.

On their days off at the end of every month, the disciples of the Zephyr Academy from both the main and branch divisions would clamber onto horse drawn carriages and make their way towards Chan Lin Town. The disciples would wilfully squander their riches there, releasing the pent up tensions within, accumulated in the past month.

The Zephyr Academy's main and branch divisions were not sharing the same campus and Qiao Chu and his gang could only join up with Jun Wu Xie after arriving in Chan Lin Town.

As the carriage trundled along, Fan Zhuo was looking outside the window with sparkling eyes at the passing scenery. His eyes soaked up the sight of every passing tree and every blade of grass, bringing about a glow to his slightly pale face.

After being ill for such a long time, he could not remember the last time he had stepped out of the little bamboo grove, or how long it had been since he had come out from the Zephyr Academy. The vegetation and architecture that lined the road might all have been uninteresting and dull, but to Fan Zhuo's eyes, they made for a wondrous sight.

He was able to see in the near future, he would be able to peel off his heavy cloak of ill health and enjoy the amazing sights the wondrous world had to offer, traversing the seas and crossing over the mountains.

As his longing for the exciting future he saw in his mind grew,

Fan Zhuo could not help but to turn around and stare at Jun Xie.

Jun Wu Xie wasn't interested in the scenery and when she saw Fan Zhuo turn to her, she unconsciously picked up the little black cat from her lap and threw it right into Fan Zhuo's face!

“Meow!!”

What was that for! ? Would it still be alright if it had fallen out of the window! ?

Having the cat shoved right onto his face, Fan Zhuo was shocked. He hurriedly moved to carry the soft furry cat, cradling it in his arms, and soon a rosy tinge rose into his cheeks as his fingers caressed the soft fluffy touch of the cat's fur.

The little black cat gave up on struggling and stretched itself out while its eyes looked mournfully at Lord Meh Meh who had snuggled itself deep into Jun Wu Xie's embrace.

Ever since the dumb sheep had appeared, its standing in its mistress' eyes had fallen lower every single day.

[Life has no more “meow”ning!]

Chapter 539: “Chan Lin Town (2)”

“We’ll be reaching Chan Lin Town in a little bit. Does Little Xie have anything you would like to buy there?” Fan Zhuo asked, with his cheeks in a slight blush as he gingerly carried the little black cat in his arms. He did not dare move too much and used only his fingertips to lightly smooth out the little black cat’s fur.

“I’ll take a look around first.” Jun Wu Xie replied, rubbing Lord Meh Meh’s full bodied wool, as her eyes narrowed in satisfaction.

She did not have much she would like to buy, but a heap of things she would like to sell.

Besides the pile of spirit stones that they had gathered from the Battle Spirits Forest, Jun Wu Xie had in hand a batch of her elixirs. They were refined while she was with the Qing Yun Clan, when she had nothing much to do, and they accumulated to quite a haul.

On this trip to the auction house, she intended to see whether she could find a suitable sort of pill furnace or something suitable for her elixir refinement. It was to give her something to busy herself with while she was idling in the Zephyr Academy. Ever since Yan Bu Gui had given her the cosmos sack, she had not had to worry that she would have too much stock of elixirs and could not store or carry them with her.

Fan Jin might be a little too compassionate, but he was nevertheless meticulous when making his arrangements for them. He had not only arranged horse carriages for Fan Zhuo and Jun Wu Xie, he had even arranged everything to the last detail for Qiao Chu and the others. From ample space for them on the carriages to their reservations for lodgings in Chan Lin Town, nothing was missed out. Once they reached Chan Lin Town, Jun Wu Xie would not have to worry about locating the rest of the group to gather them altogether.

The well planned arrangements had allowed the two people who

had a weakness for cute and fluffy animals, to travel free of worries, and indulge themselves by cradling and stroking one cute fluffy creature each in the carriage, the expression on their faces filled with blissful content.

The carriages rumbled along, and finally reached Chan Lin Town.

They were just in time for lunch, and the streets were filled with people. Many of them were youths dressed in the uniforms of the Zephyr Academy, lugging big and small bags on their backs, tirelessly weaving through the crowd, making their way to reach all the corners of Chan Lin Town.

The one thing that the disciples of the Zephyr Academy did not lack was, money!

The coachman sent his two passengers to come right before the doors of the inn that Fan Jin had arranged for them and drove the carriage away to rest somewhere else after dropping his passengers off.

This was the first time Fan Zhuo was seeing such bustle of people going about their own activities and business. The hawkers on both sides of the street were shouting out their wares and though it was midday, the overhanging lanterns lent a festive ambience to the scene and as he watched the crowds of people bustle by, Fan Zhuo's eyes sparkled in awe.

The two of them were dressed in casual clothes and when compared to the youths dressed in the Zephyr Academy's uniform traversing the streets, they were seen to be less conspicuous.

After he had his fill of the sights, Fan Zhuo finally raised his foot to enter the inn with Jun Xie.

But before he could even digest all the different things he had just seen, a shout coming from inside the inn almost tore the roof off!

“What a joke! First come first served, don't you know that! ? We

already reserved the room in advance, why should it be given to you?" A familiar voice hollered within the inn and Jun Wu Xie who was walking in beside Fan Zhuo raised her eyes slightly.

Within the main hall on the ground level, several youths were split on two sides, engaged in an argument.

One of the group of youths were dressed in the uniforms of the Zephyr Academy and they stood with their chins lifted high, their stance incorrigibly arrogant.

On the other side, were three guys and one girl. They were rather young and a handsome youth among them currently had one foot planted on a stool, adamantly blocking the way up the stairs to the second floor.

The other guests within the main hall were all watching with anticipation at the sparks flying through the air. The owner and assistant were watching on worriedly. They wanted to go forward to say something but they did not dare to make any rash move.

A youth from among those wearing the Zephyr Academy's uniform stepped forward and laughed jeeringly at the youths blocking their way.

"Good dogs do not obstruct the way of people. First come first served is just nonsense. The inn is a place of business, and they would naturally let the room to whoever is able to pay. If you think that is unfair, you can jolly well outbid us. If you cannot, then go do your barking someplace else!"

Chapter 540: “Chan Lin Town (3)”

“About that I would like to ask, the room has already been reserved, is it reasonable for someone to just pay more and be able to lay claim and assume priority over its use?” The youth blocking the stairway scoffed.

“It’s not up to you to say whether that is reasonable. But who in the world would reject more money? If there is more money to be made, the innkeeper would be stupid not to accept it.” The youth from the Zephyr Academy said.

Seeing that the two groups of youths were about to engage into a brawl, Jun Wu Xie suddenly walked over to them.

“Reservations, can be changed?” Jun Wu Xie asked of the stunned innkeeper.

The innkeeper stared blankly at her for a moment and he shook his head.

“Our humble establishment never did have such a rule. But these few days happen to be the rest days for the Zephyr Academy’s disciples and many of them have come to the town, causing a room crunch everywhere, resulting in.....” The innkeeper was at a loss. His inn was considered one of the most popular inns in Chan Lin Town and even though their prices were high, the disciples from the Zephyr Academy never had a lack of money to splurge and hence, this inn had become the most popular inn among the disciples of the Zephyr Academy.

But the inn had limited rooms and just a few days ago, someone had come in had made a reservation for several of their rooms. The innkeeper had already accepted the money in payment for those rooms and had not expected such a tricky situation to occur.

Several other disciples from the Zephyr Academy had suddenly come in and saw that there were several rooms still vacant upstairs

and had insisted on taking them by paying more money. At that same moment, the guests who had made the reservations came in and when the two parties met, the situation turned out to become like this.

The innkeeper was having a major headache and did not know what to do. He was reluctant to offend the disciples from the Zephyr Academy and neither did he want to contravene the rules set in the inn.

Jun Wu Xie listened to the innkeeper's explanation without a word and then turned to walk up towards the arrogant youths from the Zephyr Academy.

The tiny figure suddenly flashed into a brilliant yellow streak of light and before the youths even realised what was happening, they were suddenly swept up within a powerful force and with a whirlwind of screams, the youths found themselves involuntarily thrown out the door of the inn's wide doors!

The whole inn fell into absolute silence. All eyes were fixed on the small tiny figure who had suddenly thrown out such a forceful attack.

The youths outside were thrown into complete disarray and they saw stars under the midday sky. It wasn't for a long while before they recovered themselves adequately to shout back: "Who are you! ? You dare to lay your hands on us! You must be tired of living!"

They shook their heads to clear the dizziness from their heads. Their eyes fell on the tiny figure standing at the doors of the inn. The eyes on that face with its delicate features stared coldly at them, and fell on every single one of them in turn.

"Didn't all of you hear what the innkeeper said?" Jun Wu Xie said, her chilly gaze beginning to turn frosty.

"Jun..... Jun Xie....." One of the youths among them stammered,

recognising the infamous character among the disciples of the Zephyr Academy. He had found himself suddenly frozen, when his eyes saw the tiny figure before his eyes.

Whereas the youths in the other group that had been caught in the confrontation had paused when they saw the tiny figure, and broke out in smiles a moment after.

“Little Xie! You’re here at last!” Qiao Chu put his foot back down and walked up with his face beaming.

Jun Wu Xie glanced at him a brief moment and turned back to face the disciples dressed in the Zephyr Academy’s uniform. She lifted a tiny hand and rested it upon a marble pillar by the main doors of the inn.

A loud crack split through the air and the cold hard stone beneath her hand crumbled into dust under the power of her concentrated spiritual power in her palm.

The youths outside the inn shivered at the sight.

“Scram.” Jun Wu Xie said softly.

The youths scrambled to quickly get away from there. Jun Xie had a notorious reputation in the Zephyr Academy, and those rumours had carried with them on her great spiritual powers. All the disciples knew that she had broken through to the orange spirit level at the young age of fourteen, but they never would have dreamed it possible but they saw with their own eyes that the glow surrounding Jun Xie was brilliantly yellow!

That was the glow of a yellow leveled spirit!

Chapter 541: “Chan Lin Town (4)”

Not only the youths dressed in the Zephyr Academy’s uniform were frightened into running away, but even the other guests in the inn had stared in wide eyed horror and disbelief at the slowly dissipating yellow light from Jun Wu Xie’s hand.

A fourteen year old yellow spirit.....

Once news of this spread, it was sure to leave many people shocked!

If they had not seen it for themselves, they would never believe it no matter how many people told them about it.

Having gotten rid of the pesky flies, Jun Wu Xie returned back into the inn and threw out an ingot of silver to the innkeeper.

The flustered innkeeper hurried forward to catch the ingot, his forehead covered in a sheen of sweat.

“Compensation.” Jun Wu Xie said simply.

The innkeeper nodded eagerly and did not say another word.

Towards a youth who was so prodigiously gifted, the innkeeper would never dare to say a single word against him. Moreover, the youth was extremely generous and the compensation given was enough for him to purchase five of those marble pillars.

“Little Xie, your methods are a little vicious.” Qiao Chu slunk up to come beside Jun Wu Xie. The other group of people involved in the confrontation with the Zephyr Academy’s disciples had been him, Hua Yao, and company.

“Why should I waste my breath?” Jun Wu Xie asked, an eyebrow raised.

Qiao Chu grinned like a fool.

“Little Xie, these are your companions?” A slender figure stepped out from the crowd, carrying the little black cat and Lord Meh Meh

in his arms, a wide smile beaming on his face. His gentle and friendly gaze swept over the group of youths standing beside Jun Xie.

Jun Wu Xie nodded.

“And this is?” Hua Yao asked, a quizzical look on his face.

Fan Zhuo said with a laugh: “My name is Fan Zhuo, and I came here with Little Xie.”

Hua Yao was surprised and Qiao Chu and the rest had a queer expression on their faces. They had heard Fan Jin mention about his own little brother before and now that Qiao Chu was seeing the person in the flesh, Qiao Chu’s face could not help but take on a look of sympathy.

Fan Zhuo was looking rather puzzled, not knowing why Qiao Chu and the others were looking at him so weirdly.

It made him feel that Qiao Chu was pitying him.

“So you are Fan Zhuo, you’re so pitiful my brother.” Qiao Chu exclaimed with a sigh and patted Fan Zhuo on the shoulder, as if he couldn’t be anymore obvious.

So, this is the poor guy who is the fiance of that black widow of a woman. What a poor guy!

Fan Zhuo didn’t know how to react to Qiao Chu’s melancholy greeting, thinking that Qiao Chu was pitying him for his weak body and could only manage a weak smile as he said: “I’m feeling much better now, all thanks to Little Xie.”

But the pitiful look on Qiao Chu’s face did not diminish in the slightest.

Fan Zhuo was even more puzzled.

Fan Jin had arranged for a room for each of them and after the six of them have gathered, they separated and each went to check out their own rooms before congregating once again back together

in Jun Wu Xie's room.

Fortunately, the room was big enough or they would have a hard time squeezing so many people in.

“Come come come, hand over your spirit stones.” Qiao Chu sat down at the table and threw out all the spirit stones he had, scattering them on the table. The pile of spirit stones grew, a myriad of colours, as Fan Zhuo stared at them with his mouth agape.

Within the pile of spirit stones, there were quite a few of them that belonged to high grade Spirit Beasts and those were so precious that no amount of money could buy them.

But Qiao Chu had so nonchalantly thrown so many of them onto the table and that had shocked Fan Zhuo quite a bit.

But Fan Zhuo was in for quite a bit more of a shock as following Qiao Chu's lead, Hua Yao, Fei Yan and Rong Ruo followed suit and took out their share of spirit stones as well. Even Jun Xie took out a bunch, and they all heaped upon the table.

As he watched the pile getting higher, Fan Zhuo's eyes grew wider.

“These..... are all from the Spirit Hunt in the Battle Spirits Forest?” Fan Zhuo asked in amazement, looking at Qiao Chu and the others.

“Just a small part. Most of it was contributed by Lord Meh Meh.” Qiao Chu replied with an easy laugh, not forgetting to flatter Lord Meh Meh lying flat with its hooves splayed out by Jun Wu Xie's feet, throwing the sheep a look of adulation.

Lord Meh Meh immediately stuck its chin up arrogantly, its little woolly ball of a tail wagging in approval.

Chapter 542: “Chan Lin Town (5)”

Lord Meh Meh? Fan Zhuo was getting more and more confused.

“Wait.” Jun Wu Xie said suddenly, after she took out her share of the spirit stones. Under the eyes of Qiao Chu and the others, she reached out and picks out several high grade spirit stones.

“These, I want.”

High grade spirit stones were rare and Jun Wu Xie did not intend to go exchange them for money. The spirit stones would be better used if they were used to forge new rings for their ring spirits, or even brought back to be given to the Rui Lin Army.

Not a single one among the group in the room protested Jun Wu Xie’s actions in the slightest. They allowed Jun Wu Xie to slowly pick from the pile and even helped to pick out a few to place them before Jun Wu Xie.

None of them even bothered to ask Jun Wu Xie what she intended to use those precious spirit stones for.

Jun Wu Xie selected a few out from the high grade spirit stones they had picked out from the pile and handed the rest to Qiao Chu and the others.

Qiao Chu blinked in confusion at Jun Wu Xie’s queer actions and asked confused: “Little Xie, what are you doing?”

Didn’t she just pick them out? Why was she returning them back to him?

“Rings.” Jun Wu Xie said, looking at the ring on Qiao Chu’s finger, linking him to his ring spirit.

It finally dawned on Qiao Chu. Although the spirit rings they wore on their fingers were formed from the ring spirits themselves, there existed a special method where one could enhance them. And the most critical part of the process was to set

a spirit stone onto their spirit rings whereby it would increase the ring spirit's powers, this method was handed down through the ages.

To reforge a spirit ring, besides picking out a suitable spirit stone, a highly skilled craftsman was needed to carry out the forging process to fully amplify the ring spirit's power from the spirit stone's enhancements.

Forging a spirit ring was commonly carried out by ordinary jewelers and even though they did not possess the highest skills, the effects were nevertheless already outstanding.

It wasn't that Qiao Chu and his gang had not thought of doing that before but they had lived being embarrassingly short on money and before they met Miss Moneybags Jun Wu Xie, they could not even afford to buy clothes for themselves, not to mention even thinking of forging spirit rings. They might be able to find a way to hunt for the spirit stones but the cost of setting them in spirit rings were impossibly high and beyond their means. Hence, when they got their hands on these spirit stones, the first thought that entered their minds was to sell them all for money and did not for a moment think of using it on themselves.

Their line of thought had become habitual and they had neglected to consider their own needs.

But the idea had not escaped Jun Wu Xie.

Needless to say, with their current depleted financial situation, the money needed for the forging of the rings would have to be paid by Jun Wu Xie once again.

"Erm..... Should we use this period of time to find someone to forge the rings for us?" Qiao Chu was deeply grateful but seeing how close they all have gotten, he was feeling slightly too awkward afraid that he would seem a little soft to outright express his gratitude.

Jun Wu Xie nodded.

The strength that the high grade spirit stones would provide was extremely high and there was never enough of a supply in the market. But not being able to find a Guardian grade spirit stone was Jun Wu Xie's main regret.

The power a Guardian grade spirit stone would give them, would make the enhancements a high grade spirit stone gave absolutely insignificant.

"If you need someone to forge spirit rings, maybe I can help." Fan Zhuo who had been silent all this while suddenly spoke up, a wide smile beaming on his face.

"Huh? Little Zhuo, you know of a way?" Qiao Chu said, looking at Fan Zhuo with eager anticipation.

Fan Zhuo smiled gently at him and nodded.

"If all of can trust me, I can forge the spirit rings for all of you. What do you say?"

Once Fan Zhuo finished with his statement, Qiao Chu and the others suddenly stared at him in wide eyed wonder.

Did he just say he will forge our spirit rings himself and did not mean that he would be getting someone else to do it?

"Little Zhuo! You know how to forge spirit rings!?" Qiao Chu asked with a loud gulp, as he surveyed Fan Zhuo's slender and thin frame.

That skinny arm and stick thin legs are capable of lifting a hammer?

Chapter 543: “Chan Lin Town (6)”

Fan Zhuo replied, beaming brightly: “I know a little.”

“Then we’ll leave it all to you.” Without another word, Qiao Chu handed the spirit stone allocated to him to Fan Zhuo.

Fan Zhuo was surprised. He had thought that Qiao Chu and the others would ask him a more on it before they would be properly assured to leave the forging to him as forging a spirit ring was no small matter and if the ringsmith had any ulterior motives and employed a little trickery in the forging process, it would cause great harm to their ring spirits. But Qiao Chu and his gang had simply asked whether he knew how to do it and had fully entrusted the highly important task to him. That had been beyond Fan Zhuo’s expectations.

Following right after, Hua Yao and the others handed their spirit stones over to Fan Zhuo as well, without a moment’s hesitation.

“I trust Little Xie’s judgement of people.” Qiao Chu told him with a laugh.

Their little companion was extremely sharp and astute and if she did not trust this person, she would not have brought him along on the trip.

Fan Zhuo laughed, the laughter shining in his eyes.

“I will not disappoint you guys. But to forge your spirit rings, I will need a few more things. I’ll see if they have anything suitable at the auction.” Fan Zhuo didn’t want to explain too much, he felt that the best reward for their unhesitant trust was to do a good job of it for them.

After the plans were firmed up, the companions starting chatting merrily. With the addition of Fan Zhuo, Qiao Chu played the jester once again and laughter roared within the room.

Hua Yao and the others all similarly felt, compared to the

straight laced and unbending Fan Jin, this smiley Fan Zhuo was a lot more pleasing to the eye.

Chan Lin Town had only one auction house and it was simply called the Chan Lin Auction House. They held an auction every three days and today happened to be the day that an auction would be held. After having their dinner, the six companions stepped out of the inn. Compared to daytime, Chan Lin Town was much busier at night. Fire torches shone, lighting up the streets in the dark of night. Bright merry lanterns were lit, hoisted up high, decorating the bustling streets and little alleys.

Many more interesting things were added Chan Lin Town scene at night. Stages featuring various circus acts and opera performances popped up and more hawkers filled the streets peddling all kinds of wares.

The main street was so crowded it was hard to move through it and disciples of the Zephyr Academy made up for a large part of them. People from the various powers had also come seeking these Zephyr Academy disciples. Although the disciples of the Zephyr Academy still had not stepped out into the world, but due to the highly revered reputation of the Zephyr Academy, their youths were already seen to be the cream of the crop. The different powers intended to win the young youths over while they were still inexperienced and guileless, and after they graduate, they would have gained themselves another formidable strength.

It was due to that reason, that Chan Lin Town became especially crowded at these times.

The six youths, melded into the sea of people and were quickly completely swallowed up.

Due to the tight squeeze, Jun Wu Xie did not bring Lord Meh Meh out with her but had left it back at the inn together with the little black cat, forcing the black cat to act as a little custodian.

Along the way, Fan Zhuo wished he had more eyes to absorb

more of the sights that surrounded them. The heavy bustle of the endless sea of people made Fan Zhuo's joy gradually grow. Fortunately for Qiao Chu's tall and strong frame, he was able to shield Fan Zhuo and Jun Wu Xie, and that had prevented his two companions, one frail and weakly and the other small and petite, from being separated from the group, with the endless waves of trudging people.

Even with their efficient human shield, when the group reached a part of the street where it was less crowded, the clothes on Fan Zhuo were nevertheless rather badly creased.

"This place is really bustling with people!" Fan Zhuo exclaimed excitedly, his face smiling widely.

"You like it?" Qiao Chu asked, panting heavily as he looked at Fan Zhuo. They did not know that he had very nearly lost his shoe as he had waded through the sea of people.

"Not exactly, but it's a new experience!" Fan Zhuo piped happily.

"We need to cross two more streets before we get to the auction house. If we rush over now, we should be able to still take part in the second half of the auction." Fan Yan said, referring to the map he held in his hands, comparing the landmarks on the map to the area they were standing at.

Chapter 544: “Mysterious Black Stone (1)”

Due to its proximity to the Zephyr Academy, a large portion of the Chan Lin Auction House’s clientele were disciples from the Zephyr Academy. People who could afford to enroll into the Zephyr Academy were from rather established families or significant powers. Common trinkets would not be able to catch their attention. Hence, the Chan Lin Auction House had no lack of uncommon treasures, hordes of merchants came here, bringing with them many rare and precious goods.

The Chan Lin Auction House’s auctions starts at dusk. The skies were already fully dark now and the auction was already half done.

When Jun Wu Xie and her companions arrived at the auction house, they were just bringing a new item onto the stage and a fiery bidding war had already started.

They had private rooms in the Chan Lin Auction House and they were situated on the second level. The individual rooms were specially provided for guests who did not like to be disturbed and one can enjoy the use of these private rooms by paying a fixed fee. Jun Wu Xie paid up and the six companions went straight up to the second level.

The room wasn’t too big with three surrounding walls. The fourth side facing the stage was closed up with a beautiful wood carved low rail.

Light refreshments were provided and after the six companions were seated, they turned to look at the item displayed on the stage.

Many of the items put up for auction now were mostly spirit stones and medium grade ones were set as the minimum grade and anything lower than that were all rejected by the auction house.

Jun Wu Xie watched the auction proceed on quietly. Nothing brought onto the stage was able to pique her interest. Neither the

next few items auctioned off had caught her attention as well.

When it came to spending money, Hua Yao, Qiao Chu and the others had even less of an interest and only Fan Zhuo was the lone person watching the auction excitedly, looking extremely interested in seeing how an auction worked.

Time passed and they had been sitting in the room for more than an hour and just when Jun Wu Xie was getting bored, a cry of alarm broke out from the first level of the auction house.

That cry attracted the attention of all six of the youths in the room!

On the stage, a black rock of stone about half a man's height was being carried up. The black stone seemed to be abnormally heavy and the whole rock was jet black in colour, the ragged edges looking extremely well weathered.

A mysterious rock of unknown origins was being brought out for auction like this and it had puzzled many of the people on the floor. The auctioneer fought to maintain his confident smile, but his insides were turning topsy turvy, struggling to come up with a script for the item.

Bringing a rock out for auction, the people were staring at the item in disbelief.

But the person who had entrusted the item to them had been someone the owner of the Chan Lin Auction House was familiar with. That person had repeatedly assured the owner that the item was rare and precious before the auction house had reluctantly accepted it. Just as expected, the item had just been brought onto the stage and it had created sure a furore.

The people seated on the floor were all craning their necks and peering curiously at the mysterious rock of unknown origins, patiently waiting for the auctioneer to give them an introduction of it.

However, the man said with a frozen expression: “This jet black rock, was discovered in lands beyond Heaven’s End Cliff and it contains mysterious power. But the stone is abnormally strong and cannot be cut. If anyone here can solve this dilemma, they can win this item at the asking base price.”

Heaven’s End Cliff was a bottomless steep cliff. The bottom of the cliff is covered by thick fog and no one had ever climbed down from it. People have attempted to scale down the steep precipice with ropes but hundreds of meters of rope still did not bring them down to the bottom and people had not dared travel there since.

It was rumoured that the bottom of the Heaven’s End Cliff, many powerful Guardian grade Spirit Beasts resided and anyone who attempted to climb down to the bottom of the cliff would finally disappear, where they were basically believed to have been swallowed by the powerful Guardian grade Spirit Beasts.

A mysterious place, with its terrifying rumours of being the home for hordes of Guardian grade Spirit Beasts quickly discouraged anyone who held the slightest interest in Heaven’s End Cliff and no one knew of people who had attempted it.

Chapter 545: “Mysterious Black Stone (2)”

It was a place shrouded in mystery, and rumoured to be filled with Guardian grade Spirit Beasts that roam within. Such a place quickly killed off any intentions a person might have to explore the place below Heaven’s End Cliff.

The Heaven’s End Cliff had undoubtedly caused many imaginations to roam, but.....

That did not mean that people allowed themselves to be easily fooled by anything that was so carelessly tagged with the infamous reputation of the Heaven’s End Cliff.

The people at the auction held scant belief in the auctioneer’s words.

With just a piece of broken stone, no matter whether it had really come from beyond the Heaven’s End Cliff, the people felt that they would have no use for a piece of rock that they were not even able to cut.

People who had often frequented the Chan Lin Auction House knew the place to be shrewd. They knew everything auctioned off from the place usually cost the bidders a higher price than the market. But this time, the Chan Lin Auction House had candidly declared that the rock can be immediately won at the set base price. This way of auctioning was totally unheard of throughout the history of the Chan Lin Auction House and could be deemed as miraculous.

There could only be two reasons why the establishment would do this. One, the rock was just a piece of ordinary stone and was completely worthless. The auction house might just have tried to carelessly tag a crazy story behind its origins and wanted to be rid of the rock fast. Two, it was just as what the auctioneer had said, the rock was extraordinarily hard and the common person was unable to break it and hence they had not been able to ascertain

the rock's real worth.

If even the people in the Chan Lin Auction House were unable to cut into the rock, anyone who purchased the rock would only be able to use it as a footrest back at home!

No one would be dumb enough to do that.

The heated atmosphere within the auction quickly cooled and it became quiet. No one showed an interest towards the piece of stone displayed on the stage. Their eyes were no longer focused on the stage in front, in obvious protest, wanting the auction house to quickly remove the item off the stage, so they can continue to compete for the treasures that would be subsequently brought out for auction.

After the base price for the stone was announced, the silence grew to become deafening.

Three hundred thousand taels.

For something that had originated from beyond the Heaven's End Cliff, the price was not unreasonable.

But the problem was, it was just a piece of rock.

That price would be enough to win the people a high grade spirit stone, and no one was prepared to use that sum of money on a broken piece of rock they could not use.

The auctioneer stood upon the stage, sweat ran down his back. This was the first time the Chan Lin Auction House was met with such a predicament. If not for the unique identity of the client, the owner would have hurriedly gotten his people to remove the piece of rock from the stage.

Backstage, behind the ongoing auction, two middle aged men had their eyes peeled and were staring fixedly at the situation out front.

One of the men, who was lavishly dressed let out a sigh and

patted the man beside him on the shoulder before saying: “I did whatever I could to help you. You can see for yourself. No one will buy that piece of stone.” The lavishly dressed man was the owner of the Chan Lin Auction House and standing beside him, was the owner of that piece of jet black stone.

The other man’s face was fully wrapped up in bandages and traces of blood had seeped through the thick bandages. His eyes stared wide, and became bloodshot. His fists clenched up tight and blood dripped out through the heavy bandages wrapped around his fists from the amount of force exerted.

“Wait a moment more..... Just a moment.....” The man’s voice was raspy as though spoken through scalding fire. His dry split lips were slightly purple and his eyes did not waver from the auction at the front of the stage. His eyes were full of yearning and under that yearning, was endless fear and dejection.

“I might not be able to get you the three hundred thousand taels that you needed, but I can give you one hundred thousand taels first. If the item really cannot be sold, you can use that money first. You must have known..... I am not the real owner of this auction house and that is really the best I can do for you.” The owner had known the badly injured man for a long time and the lavishly dressed man was sympathetic as he tried to comfort his friend.

But the man shook his head.

“It will not do..... Anything less than three hundred thousand taels..... will not be enough..... Won’t be enough.....”

Chapter 546: “Mysterious Black Stone (3)”

The lavishly clothed man sighed once more and said: “Less is better than nothing. Just take it for your needs first.”

The bandaged man nevertheless shook his head. “One hundred thousand taels will not be enough! This is ten lives we are talking about! They were brothers in arms who had gone through life and death with me! I could never.... How could I.... If I do not raise the money, I will not be able to hand it over to their families. When I see my brothers in the afterlife, how am I going to face them then!?”

As the man spoke, he got so agitated that he started to tremble visibly. The ever existent pain that wrecked at his body constantly reminded him of everything that had happened that fateful day.

Eleven of them had climbed down the Heaven’s End Cliff. Eleven men..... And finally only he, alone, was able to return alive. All of his comrades had not been able to escape from that terrible place, and he had not been able to even retrieve their bodies. If he still wasn’t able to ensure that their families lived on without worries, then he would be worse than a beast!

This piece of jet black rock, was filled with the blood of all eleven of them, and it was brought back here with ten lives in exchange.

While eleven men had made their way down Heaven’s End Cliff, only one had climbed back up alive, with the black stone rock they had earlier hoisted up the cliff right at the onset.

The bandaged man could no longer remember how he had brought the black rock back here with him, he could only remember his journey back had been filled with tears and blood that had constantly impaired his sight.

The lavishly clothed man sighed helplessly once more. He had found the badly injured man all covered in blood just outside Chan

Lin Town that day and had thought the man would not survive his injuries. The garish wounds he had seen would have taken the life of any a lesser man but his friend had determinedly fought to stay alive.

“We’ll wait a little while more then.” Helpless, the lavishly clothed man could do nothing but continue to wait with his friend. But as the person placed in charge of the Chan Lin Auction House, it was very clear to him that no matter what secrets the piece of jet black rock held, they would not be able to sell it off.

To the common man, that was just an ordinary piece of rock.

Within the auction hall, silence hung heavily. No one wanted to give their attention to a piece of rock that was so heavily overpriced.

Meanwhile, up on the second level, Qiao Chu was staring at the piece of jet black rock with undisguised mirth.

“This is a rare sight. I did not know that people can actually bring rocks out for auction, and the asking price is an incredulous three hundred thousand taels!? Is the person mad?” Heaven’s End Cliff or wherever it came from, he had no idea what kind of a place that was. But putting a price on a piece of rock that costs as much as the fees for the Zephyr Academy, almost made someone like Qiao Chu who was so used to leading a life of poverty, almost drop his jaw to the ground.

“It does not matter whether he is mad, but no one is playing along with his insanity. Can’t you see that everyone is not even bothering to look at the piece of rock?” Fei Yan said with a shrug. He was always meticulous and detailed in his observations of people and he had noticed that the crowd was getting a little impatient with the wait and he expects that the outrageous item put up for auction would be removed from the stage in a very short while.

“I found it really incredible, that anyone would in reality possess

the confidence to even bring a piece of rock to the auction house and put it up for auction!” Qiao Chu exclaimed indignantly. They had lived a life where they did not even know when their next meal was and here people were hoping to get a windfall from a piece of rock!

“Somehow, I do not feel that is just a common piece of rock.” Fan Zhuo who had not spoken a word all this time suddenly said.

Everyone else turned to look at him.

“Things from beyond Heaven’s End Cliff would not be ordinary. If my guess is correct, the jet black rock is Black Jade Stone. You can extract Black Silver from Black Jade Stone and Black Silver can be used to forge spirit rings whereby its effects would be more outstanding than gold, silver or any precious metals. But the Black Jade Stone is extremely hard and very difficult to cut, but I believe it can be achieved by tempering it by fire.”

Chapter 547: “Mysterious Black Stone (4)”

Fan Zhuo spoke with a serious tone, his eyes locked onto the Black Jade Stone as a sudden sparkle shone from deep within his clear eyes.

“Black Silver?” Rong Ruo’s eyes suddenly narrowed when she heard the term used. She looked at Fan Zhuo, her eyes seemingly seeking for something.

Qiao Chu and the others had a queer look in their eyes as well, but their curious look in their stares suddenly disappeared as quickly as they had appeared.

“It is a kind of metal extremely suitable for the forging of spirit rings. It is very rare, that big piece of Black Jade Rock there would only yield an amount of Black Silver roughly the size of a pigeon’s egg.” Fan Zhuo was absorbed in his explanation and he suddenly hesitated a moment before he turned to Jun Xie.

“Little Xie, that item is really suitable for the forging of everyone’s spirits rings, why don’t I try to place a bid for it?”

They already had the spirit stones, but they still have not decided on the metal to be used for the forging.

“No need.” Jun Wu Xie replied. “I’ll buy it.”

Fan Zhuo was surprised.

Jun Wu Xie turned to look at Fan Zhuo and said: “You can’t afford it.”

Fan Zhuo immediately blushed a slight pink.

He had really forgotten all about that! He had rarely come out and was completely unfamiliar with the pricing of things outside. Before he had left, Fan Jin had shoved several thousand taels into his hands and after thinking a little further, he realised that his few thousand taels was hopelessly inadequate when it came to

buying a three hundred thousand taels item.....

No way he could afford it!

Fan Zhuo's red face grew into a brighter shade.

Qiao Chu was as insensitive as ever as he roared in laughter, placing a big hand on Fan Zhuo's shoulder.

"Little Zhuo, do not worry! We are all "kept" by Miss Moneybags! Little Xie is fabulously rich!" After saying that, Qiao Chu even shamelessly threw Jun Wu Xie a wink.

Jun Wu Xie did not say a word, and just rolled her eyes.

"Dumb Qiao is really getting more and more shameless." Fei Yan sneered.

Qiao Chu did not bite the bait and said: "Not shameless, you buy it then."

"....." Fei Yan was at a loss for words.

Hua Yao shook his head in helplessness. Being "kept" by Jun Wu Xie, Dumb Qiao integrity had really crumbled to total oblivion.

After the decision was made, Jun Wu Xie rang the bronze bell on the second level.

The bell rang loud and clear, and the muted whispers among the crowd died suddenly. Everyone raised their head to peer up into the second level.

The ringing of the bronze bell was an indication that a guest on the second level had made a bid.

Backstage, the bandaged man who had fallen into dejection and despair suddenly looked up, peering in the direction where the bell had sounded. He looked into a private room high up on the second level and saw a tiny and petite figure. He had delicate features and was a young youth. He stood by the rail, his hand holding the bronze bell.

The youth was speaking to a servant who had hurried over to him and the Chan Lin Auction House servant hollered: “Guest in private room one makes a bid for three hundred thousand taels!”

That shout ignited the hushed crowd in the Chan Lin Auction House into a sudden fervour!

[Someone was actually willing to spend three hundred thousand taels on that broken and useless piece of rock!? Has that person gone mad?]

Everyone clamoured to see, trying to peer into the private room on the second level.

When they all saw that it was a rather young youth, everyone thought the same thing, “the fool and his money soon parts”. They felt the young and ignorant whelp must have been so impressed at hearing the words “Heaven’s End Cliff” and naively thought that the item held immeasurable value, if not, no one would ever spend such a big amount of money so carelessly.

Besides the many who were shocked, many more were snickering quietly, sneering at Jun Wu Xie’s naivety for having been duped by the Chan Lin Auction House.

After the unimaginable ordeal he went through waiting for someone to make a bid, the auctioneer almost cried tears of relief. He did not hesitate in the slightest as he raised his little hammer and struck it down three times in quick succession, mortally afraid that Jun Wu Xie would pull back the offer and he hurried to seal the deal as quickly as he could.

Chapter 548: “Mysterious Black Stone (5)”

Men from the Chan Lin Auction House carried the black piece of rock off the stage smiling. Jun Wu Xie paid up the money and would collect the item only after the auction.

Thereafter, the excited atmosphere came back to the auction house. Precious items big and small were brought up onto the stage one after another and wave after wave of intense bidding wars were carried out.

None of the items that were brought out after the rock interested the six companions. The exciting atmosphere brought about by Jun Wu Xie’s swift and decisive splurge had died down. People who were waiting to see “the fool and his money part” once more were left disappointed.

Another hour went by and the auction came to a fulfilling close. Every single item was auctioned off and none remained.

Many people departed satisfied, leaving with their trophies they had won in their arms.

As Jun Wu Xie had won a “big” item, she had to wait till she was the last one before the men from the auction house carried the Black Jade Stone out.

Accompanying the men, another middle aged man dressed in a brocade robe came towards them.

“Good evening everyone, I am the owner of the Chan Lin Auction House, and my name is He Chang Le. I do not find any of our esteemed customers’ faces familiar, is this your first time here at the Chan Lin Auction House?” He Chang Le welcomed the companions with laughter and his eyes smiling as he surveyed the group of extremely good looking youths, with an exceptional air surrounding them.

Jun Wu Xie nodded, seemingly not entirely interested in chatting

with He Chang Le.

Undaunted, He Chang Le persisted by saying: “Since you are our new customers, and your first bid was so generous, as the owner of the Chan Lin Auction House, I would like to gift to you an emblem we reserve only for our most distinguished guests.” As he spoke, Chang Le pulled out a palm sized, gold gilded emblem. Two characters, “Chan Lin” were carved on the emblem.

“With this emblem, all of you, as our esteemed customers, would be able to gain direct entry to our private rooms when you come back to the Chan Lin Auction House, with no extra charges.”

Jun Wu Xie took one glance at He Chang Le and motioned to Qiao Chu with a wave of her hand. Qiao Chu immediately went forward to accept the emblem.

Having spent three hundred thousand at the auction, Qiao Chu’s heart was still wincing in pain. At least, with this emblem, they would not have to pay for a private room anymore next time and he was glad to accept it.

Seeing that Jun Wu Xie was willing to accept his gesture of goodwill, He Chang Le smiled as he said: “To be honest, for bidding on the piece of black rock today, our Young Master has greatly helped a friend of mine. If our Young Master does not mind it, that friend of mine would like to meet you, and thank you personally.”

Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow and before she opened her mouth to reply, Hua Yao took the lead to say: “If it’s sincere, let him come.”

He Chang Le nodded, and turned to fetch his friend.

Hua Yao took a step back and whispered beside Jun Wu Xie’s ear: “Black Silver is not something you can find in the Lower Realm but only in the Middle Realm. That piece of Black Jade Stone should not even be here. If that piece of Black Jade Stone is really from

the bottom of the Heaven's End Cliff, that place must be holding some secrets.”

How did something that could only be found in the Middle Realm come to appear in the Lower Realm?

Jun Wu Xie was able to immediately make a good guess.

Hua Yao and the others must be suspecting that the Black Jade Stone was somehow linked to the Dark Emperor's tomb.

Having thought that, Jun Wu Xie need not say anything more, but.....

Hua Yao said Black Silver did not exist in the Lower Realm, so how did Fan Zhuo know about it?

Jun Wu Xie clearly remembered that Fan Zhuo was the first one to recognise that piece of rock to be Black Jade Stone, and he was also the one who said that Black Silver could be extracted from Black Jade Stone. How was it that Fan Zhuo would be so familiar with Black Jade Stone that existed only in the Middle Realm?

Jun Wu Xie frowned as she pondered on it. She sneaked a glance at Fan Zhuo and saw that he was staring at the Black Jade Stone with great interest, seemingly not to have heard the conversation between Hua Yao and her.

Chapter 549: “Mysterious Black Stone (6)”

After a short while, He Chang Le came back. The other man who was with him made Qiao Chu and the others stare, their eyes widened.

That man was tall and muscular, and his entire body was fully covered with bandages. Although his clothes covered up much of the bandages, it was nevertheless clear that he was fully wrapped up in them. Before he had even gotten close to the companions, the stench of blood could already be smelt in the air. Only his eyes, nose, ears and mouth were exposed while the rest of his head was fully bandaged up and those originally white bandages were tinged with blood and had taken on a slightly red shade.

He walked slowly as he approached, his huge frame bringing a slightly oppressive air. When he came to stand before Jun Wu Xie, he suddenly clasped a hand over his fist and formally bent over in a deep bow.

“My name is Mu Qian Fan! I would like to humbly thank this Young Master’s generous offer of help.” Mu Qian Fan’s deep timbred voice almost made them forget about all the injuries that covered his entire body.

Towards everything that had happened today, Mu Qian Fan was unable to put what he felt into words. If he had not been able to gather the three hundred thousand taels, he would not be able to face his brothers in arms who had passed into the afterlife and the auction today had driven him into utter despair many times over.

But Jun Wu Xie had at his lowest point, dragged him up from the pits of despair.

The three hundred thousand taels to him, were just too important!

“No need.” Jun Wu Xie said simply. The stench of blood

emanating from the man made her frown slightly. She was silent a moment before she asked: “You’ve been to the Heaven’s End Cliff?”

Mu Qian Fan thought that Jun Wu Xie was doubting that the black rock had really been retrieved from beyond the Heaven’s End Cliff and he hurriedly replied: “Yes. I’ve been there. This black rock was discovered at the bottom of the cliff by my brothers and me.”

“Tell me about the Heaven’s End Cliff and I’ll accept it as your thanks.” Jun Wu Xie replied.

Mu Qian Fan was slightly surprised. When he saw that Jun Wu Xie’s group was a party of young youths, he had thought that their youthful frivolity had piqued their curiosity on the dark rumours that surrounded the Heaven’s End Cliff and he readily agreed.

He Chang Le enquired on the location of the inn they were staying at and instructed his men to sent the item over first. He then furnished Jun Wu Xie and the others with one of the private rooms for them to chat in comfort. The auction house’s servants were also thoughtfully instructed to bring them some snacks and tea.

When they were all seated in the room, Mu Qian Fan appeared a little ill at ease. He was a man past thirty and he had been used to drinking and dining with his brothers in arms who were all around his age. Suddenly thrust into a situation where he was sitting with a group of youths half his age for a chat, made him feel rather out of place.

Although Jun Wu Xie and her companions were dressed in plain clothes, the material used was of a high grade. All of them were blessed with kingly features and they carried themselves with an impressive air, looking to be from extraordinary backgrounds, which only fueled his uneasiness further.

“Big Brother Mu? Please help yourself to a little of the tea and

snacks first before you can share with us a little more in detail.” Fei Yan could see Mu Qian Fan’s uneasiness and offered a cup of tea to Mu Qian Fan with a winsome smile.

Mu Qian Fan looked up and saw a charming and pleasant “little lady” smiling sweetly at him, and the hands that were holding the teacup were even trembling ever so slightly.

He hurried to accept the offered tea and gulped it down quickly. The tea helped to calm him a little and he looked at Jun Wu Xie and the others to say: “It was about half a month ago that I went to the Heaven’s End Cliff. A band of my brothers were with me. To be honest, my group of brothers and I earn our daily keep by hunting down Spirit Beasts under the commission of people. The arduous Heaven’s End Cliff is a place very well hidden. Although there are many rumours being spread about the Heaven’s End Cliff, but the exact location of the place is known to only a rare few. All along, we had never thought much about the Heaven’s End Cliff but we were offered a commission to make a trip there and that’s why we went to the Heaven’s End Cliff.”

Chapter 550: “Mysterious Black Stone (7)”

As his memory took him back to the period just before they had set off, every single scene that appeared in his mind cut deeply into Mu Qian Fan’s heart. The brothers who had been so close, had all left him, for good.

Mu Qian Fan and his brothers in arms had always depended on accepting commissions entrusted to them by people for a living and they would often go hunt Spirit Beasts to gather spirit stones. The band of brothers would also accept assignments as armed escorts for merchant convoys and that was how Mu Qian Fan got acquainted with He Chang Le, when he had escorted the Chan Lin Auction House’s merchandise.

Till one day, a man came to them, requesting that they go to the Heaven’s End Cliff to survey the grounds at the bottom of the cliff. He had promised then, that if they were able to fully traverse the entire area below the Heaven’s End Cliff and produce a complete map, the men would be handsomely rewarded.

The promised reward would be more than enough for all of their families to live their lives free of worries.

Although the Heaven’s End Cliff was famed to be an extremely dangerous place since a long time ago, but very few people had actually been there. Many people did not even know where the Heaven’s End Cliff was, but everyone had heard many versions of the grave dangers the mysterious place held. But in order to grasp at the opportunity to earn that large sum of money, and to provide their families with a carefree life, Mu Qian Fan and his brothers finally decided to accept the commission entrusted to them.

That man had been rather generous. He had given them two hundred thousand taels as a deposit from the beginning. After accepting the money, Mu Qian Fan and his team were highly motivated and they readied themselves to set off towards the

Heaven's End Cliff. That man then gave them a map, that showed in detail the exact location of the Heaven's End Cliff.

Based on the directions shown on the map, the team were on the roads for half a month before they reached the Heaven's End Cliff.

The Heaven's End Cliff was located within a wide circular range of mountainous peaks and the cliff began from high up upon one of the peaks. In order to even reach the cliff, they had to pass through layers upon layers of dense forests. Within those forests, many Spirit Beasts roamed, and Mu Qian Fan and his brothers used their experience to pass through the danger filled forests. And when they finally arrived upon the cliff, they began to understand why the cliff was named the Heaven's End Cliff.

The Heaven's End Cliff's face looked as if it had been cleanly cut by an immense sharp blade. Beyond the cliff was an endless sea of foggy white mist and masses of cloudy fog that stretched further than the eye could see. When looking at it from the high vantage point upon the cliff, the wondrous sight made one feel as if that was where Heaven ended, stopping right at the cliff they stood upon.

When they first laid their eyes on the unbelievable view, Mu Qian Fan and his brothers in arms were all suddenly awestruck but they quickly recovered when they remembered the mission they had been entrusted with to complete. They had prepared hundred metre metal cables and carried upon their backs chains that would extend the length of the cables, showing how meticulous their preparations for the mission had been.

Climbing down the sheer cliff face alone had taken them a few days' time and they rested and ate hanging from the strong cables.

When they reached the bottom of the cliff, every single one of them were already completely exhausted and they all collapsed upon the ground for a long period, unable to move a muscle.

“What was the bottom of the Heaven's End Cliff really like?”

Qiao Chu was getting more and more excited as the story unfolded and he unknowingly asked the question in a fearful whisper.

Mu Qian Fan's eyes lowered, as he stared at his own two hands placed on the table before him. Bright red blood was spreading bit by bit across the bandages, and watching the white bandages gradually turning a bright red made for an extremely disconcerting sight.

“I don't know.....”

“What?” Qiao Chu sat up, greatly surprised.

Mu Qian Fan's voice was filled with despair and fear: “The ground at the bottom of the cliff was completely covered in a thick misty fog and we could not see anything beyond two meters away from us as they would all be enveloped by the thick fog. Under those circumstances, we were completely unable to map out anything about the area. And as we proceeded to walk in a forwardly direction, we discovered that the ground below our feet was marshland that was peppered with bottomless bog.....”

Bog holes shrouded in the thick impenetrable fog within an expanse of soft marshland were easy to miss and overlook. More often than now, people only realise the danger after they had stepped a foot into it.

Chapter 551: “Mysterious Black Stone (8)”

One of the men in Mu Qian Fan’s team had been completely swallowed up by one of those bog holes and they could not even retrieve his body after his death.

Besides the invisible bog holes scattered across the swampy marsh, terrible beasts hid within the misty fog. The team consisting of experienced and hardy men had lost half of their men under the attacks by the ferocious Spirit Beasts who hid within the cover of the blinding fog. More terrifying than all these dangers, was the poison within the mist that was everywhere, constantly around them. They had not noticed it in the beginning, it was not until a few of them had escaped out from under the fog and noticed that the wounds on their bodies were continuing to fester and rot after the poison had spread into their internal organs that they realised just how scary a place the bottom of the Heaven’s End Cliff was.

Within a fog so thick you cannot see your hand before your face, air laced with poison, ground filled with bottomless bog holes, ferocious Spirit Beasts, where any single one of the dangers could easily take your life.

That was when Mu Qian Fan finally understood why the client who knew the exact location of Heaven’s End Cliff had offered to pay them such an enormous sum of money just to compile a map of an area. He must have known of the perilous dangers that laid at the bottom of Heaven’s End Cliff, and the men were paying it back with their very own lives.

But it was already too late for regrets. With the lone exception of Mu Qian Fan, their team of eleven men had ten dead. Besides the piece of Black Jade Rock that they were unable to cut, they had gotten nothing.

As they had not been able to complete the map, they would not

be able to receive the remaining payment from the client. When Mu Qian Fan returned, he had gone to seek out the client. But when the client got to know that Mu Qian Fan and his team had almost been totally annihilated on their expedition, they had lost all desire in continuing with the conversation and had only briefly asked Mu Qian Fan about their encounters at the bottom of Heaven's End Cliff and chased him out quickly thereafter.

With all his brothers dead, he lived his life in fear holding on tightly to a mere piece of broken rock. In order to provide some consolation to the grieving families of his deceased brothers, Mu Qian Fan had no choice but to take the Black Jade Stone and entrust it to He Chang Le and to put it up for auction.

After Mu Qian Fan finished his story, he lowered his head completely. His tightly clenched fists were completely covered in his own blood.

The memory of every moment spent at the bottom of the Heaven's End Cliff was deeply entrenched in his mind. The screams of his brothers as they died haunted him horribly in his dreams, like relentless demons.

"It is definitely not a good place and you should just forget all that you just heard and just treat it as a story." Mu Qian Fan was silent for a long while before he raised his head, his eyes filled with despair and indescribable grief.

If only they had not been tempted by that reward money offered, if only they had been more down to earth and only accepted simpler missions, then his brothers would still be alive today and he would not have become just like a dead man walking.

The injuries on his body now had gotten extremely serious. He had been back for quite a period and his wounds had continued to fester and rot. The bandages he had covered himself with were not to protect his wounds but he was afraid that his horrifying looks now would frighten the people that he came into contact with.

His entire body was filled with poison he had contracted from the Heaven's End Cliff and he knew he had not long more to live. He only wished, that before he died, he would be able to help look after the families of his deceased brothers.

Jun Wu Xie patiently listened to Mu Qian Fan till he finished, her face expressionless.

Whereas Qiao Chu and the others were looking extremely solemn.

“Did I scare all of you? Haha..... It's not all that bad, just don't go to that place.” Mu Qian Fan thought that the youths had all been frightened by his account of his experiences and he hurriedly changed his tone and tried to make light of his words.

“Will you still remain in Chan Lin Town for a period?” Jun Wu Xie asked suddenly.

Chapter 552: “Mysterious Black Stone (9)”

Mu Qian Fan stared in shock and nodded his head after a moment's hesitation.

“All of us are residents of Chan Lin Town and I will naturally still be here. If you need to locate me in the near future, you can go to the last house at the end of South Street, but.....” Mu Qian Fan looked at the bandages all over his body and said with a bitter laugh: “If you still want to hear anything else from me, you will have to hurry, my body might not last much longer.”

“Your injuries are grave?” Hearing the implied meaning behind Mu Qian Fan's words, Hua Yao asked, his brow furrowed.

Mu Qian Fan nodded. “It's already a miracle that I am still living.” Among the brothers who had gone with him, two of them had breathed their last hours after being afflicted with the poison. The fact that Mu Qian Fan could last till this moment greatly surprised himself.

“Let me see?” Jun Wu Xie said suddenly.

Mu Qian Fan hesitated. He looked at Jun Wu Xie, deeply concerned. “It's rather gory, you really want to see?”

He was afraid that his disgusting wounds would frighten the young youth.

Jun Wu Xie nodded.

Mu Qian Fan sighed, and began to slowly remove the bandage on his left hand.

Flesh stuck to the bandage as it was slowly peeled off, displaying to them a bloody and gory sight as the covered wounds on his hand was once again exposed to the air.

Just one look had made all the others in the room suck in a deep breath.

The whole of Mu Qian Fan's hand looked as if it had been splattered with boiling oil and not a single part of the flesh was whole. The red blistering flesh was filled with yellow pus and looked just like a badly rotted piece of meat. Half the tip of his little finger had already rotted off and the white finger bone was visible under the gory mess.

The overpowering stench of blood and rot suddenly spread within the room.

Qiao Chu and the others suddenly turned pale.

Mu Qian Fan was suddenly very conscious of himself and he was thinking of wrapping his bandages back over his wounds in a hurry when a fair and tiny hand held down the other end of the bandage that had fallen onto the table.

Jun Wu Xie's eyes narrowed as she stared at the cankerous and festering sores on Mu Qian Fan's hand. The condition that the hand was in, showed effects that was rather similar to one of the poisons she had previously concocted but in terms of the speed that the rot, it was relatively shorter and did not seem like new flesh would grow back like hers.

Seemingly completely oblivious to what a revolting sight the rotting hand was, Jun Wu Xie instead stood up and carefully inspected the hand up close.

Mu Qian Fan was shocked by Jun Wu Xie's action. Why was such a young youth not showing any signs of fear at all? He had not only not shrunk back in fear but had instead come up close to inspect his condition carefully. The Heavens know even he himself had been badly disgusted by the rotting flesh all over his body.

But the youth had not batted an eyelid and seemed perfectly calm.

Mu Qian Fan had just wanted to say something when Qiao Chu, who had been sitting directly opposite him suddenly gave him a

sign, gesturing him to remain quiet, and even giving him a friendly and knowing smile after.

Mu Qian Fan did not know what Jun Wu Xie wanted from him. But as a man about to die, he was not too concerned about it. If Jun Wu Xie was not afraid, and wanted to take a close look, he had no qualms about showing them his revolting wounds.

After a while, Jun Wu Xie went back to her seat. Her eyes were cold as she looked at Mu Qian Fan and said: “I want to cut out some flesh.”

When Jun Wu Xie’s words came out of her mouth, not just Mu Qian Fan, but even Qiao Chu and Fei Yan had expressions of utter shock on them.

Cut some flesh?

What flesh?

She really wanted to cut out a piece of flesh from Mu Qian Fan’s hand!?

Mu Qian Fan’s eyes opened up wide, seriously doubting what he had just heard.

“You..... want my flesh?” Even if he had accepted that his death was imminent, Mu Qian Fan was nevertheless still badly traumatised by Jun Wu Xie’s words.

Chapter 553: “Mysterious Black Stone (10)”

However, Jun Wu Xie was completely unaware of how fiendishly demented her request had sounded and just nodded calmly.

“A little bit will do.”

Mu Qian Fan froze in place for a while, not understanding how such a tiny sized little youth would be so gutsy. He had not flinched in the slightest from the grotesque wounds on his hand and had now even wanted to cut out a piece of his flesh.....

Didn't he find it disgusting?

“I'll pay you.” Jun Wu Xie added.

Mu Qian Fan waved his hands before him quickly, “No need, no need. I will not live long anyway. If you..... really want to.....” Mu Qian Fan clenched his jaw and took out a short dagger. He was doomed anyway, and the wounds were giving him so much pain that he had problems eating and sleeping, so cutting out a tiny bit of his flesh would not hurt him any much more than that. Since Jun Wu Xie had bought the black rock from him, he was already a great benefactor to him, and he did not deem it proper to collect anymore money from his benefactor.

As he spoke, Mu Qian Fan was going to cut out a piece of his flesh when Jun Wu Xie raised a hand to stop him.

“I'll do it.” Jun Wu Xie said.

Mu Qian Fan was speechless, and he woodenly turned the dagger around and handed it over to Jun Wu Xie.

Jun Wu Xie held the dagger skillfully, having held a scalpel countless times in her previous life.

Staring at Jun Wu Xie's inverted way of holding the dagger, Mu Qian Fan chose to remain silent.

Jun Wu Xie inspected Mu Qian Fan's wounds carefully a moment

and just when Mu Qian Fan thought that the youth did not dare to do it, Jun Wu Xie suddenly quickly and skillfully cut into the side of his palm and carved out a thin slice of flesh about the size of his thumbnail.

The dagger was handled with such quick precision that he did not feel the pain till a little while later.

Cutting off sliver of his flesh with a single slice, Jun Wu Xie had not even blinked. She held the dagger horizontally with the sliver of flesh on top. She retrieved an empty bottle from within her robes with her other hand and emptied the piece of flesh into it.

“.....” Mu Qian Fan could not find the words to describe the youth before his eyes.

The youth had cut out a piece of his rotting flesh. But did he really just keep it in a bottle!?

Did he intend to keep it as a souvenir?

After keeping the bottle containing the rotted piece of flesh carefully, Jun Wu Xie dug out another bottle from within her robes. The palm sized bottle placed right before Mu Qian Fan.

“Three times a day, one pill each time. Take with warm water.” was Jun Wu Xie’s curt and simple instructions.

Mu Qian Fan did not understand what was happening at that moment and only stared blankly at Jun Wu Xie, and turned his eyes to stare at the bottle of medicine before him.

Having gotten used to Jun Wu Xie’s abnormal miserliness with spoken words, Qiao Chu consciously cleared his throat and generously explained it for Mu Qian Fan: “The medicine will help you with your injuries. Just do as you are told and it will be fine.”

Mu Qian Fan suddenly recovered his senses and shook his head in a hurry: “No need, the medicine will be wasted on my condition anyway. The fact that you purchased the black rock is more than enough and I am deeply grateful for it.”

He tried to refuse and wanted to return the medicine to Jun Wu Xie.

However, Jun Wu Xie only gave the medicine bottle a glance and raised the little bronze bell in the room and shook it gently. The attendant outside the room quickly shuffled in.

“Warm water.” Jun Wu Xie said.

The attendant was rather quick to realise what Jun Wu Xie was asking for and slipped out of the room quickly and returned with a pot of warm water before he quickly stepped out through the door once again.

“Dumb Qiao.”

“Here!”

“Pry his mouth open.”

“.....”

Mu Qian Fan’s face paled in shock. Qiao Chu hesitated just a moment before he jumped onto Mu Qian Fan and immediately pried his mouth open. Fei Yan stood on one side and swiftly removed a single elixir from the bottle, quickly throwing it into Mu Qian Fan’s mouth while Rong Ruo followed up by pouring the warm water directly into Mu Qian Fan’s mouth!

Chapter 554: “Heaven’s End Cliff (1)”

‘Glug..... Glug.....’

Mu Qian Fan found himself forced to swallow the unidentified elixir under the coercion of several youths.

Only after the warm water had washed the elixir down his throat did Qiao Chu and the others release Mu Qian Fan.

Mu Qian Fan almost choked to his death from the water forcefully poured down his throat. He stared helplessly at the bunch of brutal youths and was just about to speak out in protest when he suddenly felt a cooling sensation spread throughout his body. The consuming burning pain that had constantly wrecked at his body was gradually being soothed and it slowly dissipated as the cooling sensation took over him, driving the agonizing pain out of him.

His eyes widened in great surprise and he stared at Jun Wu Xie.

“The elixir.....”

“Will only provide relieve.” Jun Wu Xie said simply. She was still not able to fully ascertain what kind of poison Mu Qian Fan was afflicted with and it would have to wait till she ran a few tests before she would be able to concoct the proper antidote for it.

Mu Qian Fan was feeling deeply shocked. He finally understood why Jun Wu Xie wanted a piece of his flesh. The youth before him was intending to cure him of his poison!

Mu Qian Fan stood up suddenly and bowed deeply before Jun Wu Xie.

“Your benevolence will be deeply remembered! As long as my worthless life remains, it will be the Young Master’s to command!”

Jun Wu Xie did not reply, but only glanced briefly at Mu Qian Fan.

Mu Qian Fan was deeply grateful. But Jun Wu Xie and the others just stood up to leave. They had other things they needed to attend to.

The Black Jade Stone had already been sent back to the inn and after Jun Wu Xie and her companions got back there, they immediately enquired with the innkeeper on where they would be able to locate a smithy. After they acquired the location, Fan Zhuo hired a horse carriage and made his way there. He wanted to extract the Black Silver from the Black Jade Stone as soon as possible. In case he would suddenly feel unwell, Rong Ruo went along with him.

At that moment in Jun Wu Xie's room, there was only herself, Qiao Chu, Fei Yan and Hua Yao.

"Regarding what Mu Qian Fan had said, Brother Hua, what are your thoughts?" Fei Yan was sitting at the table, his usual mischievous personality absent as he asked with uncharacteristic sternness.

Hua Yao replied with a slight frown: "I suspect that the Dark Emperor's tomb lies below the Heaven's End Cliff."

"Why do you say that?" Jun Wu Xie asked, her interest piqued.

"We have a map with us, and Little Xie, you know that as well. We managed to lay our hands on it from the Qing Yun Clan and over this period, while we were in the Zephyr Academy's branch division, we had been investigating into the location of the second piece of the map and also studying the map we have. Fei Yan has dug up every map of the different areas we know of and tried to compare it to the human skin map we have but we have not been able to find any match. If we are to look at the map carefully, the terrain is very flat and there are no hills or mountains reflected upon it. Initially, we had thought that it might be somewhere with wide plains but after hearing what Mu Qian Fan said, I suspect that the location that the map is specifying, is actually the terrain at the

bottom of the Heaven's End Cliff." Hua Yao said, his eyes narrowed.

The Dark Emperor's tomb was in the Lower Realm and that was known to all of them. Before they had gotten the map, they had made made full preparations. Fei Yan had roamed the lands and made use of his abilities to map out all the areas he had been to. They had wanted to prepare themselves for the day that they would complete the collection of the human skin maps and locate the Dark Emperor's tomb in the shortest time possible.

But the first piece of the map they had gotten did not match any of the maps that Fei Yan had compiled. They had thought maybe the map they received was not complete enough or maybe the area that the map specified lay in a place they had never been to before.

But they had never considered that the map they held was a map of the terrain at the bottom of Heaven's End Cliff.

According to Mu Qian Fan's words, the lands below the Heaven's End Cliff were extremely vast and fully covered in impenetrable fog, making it impossible for him to explore. And the only thing he brought back from the bottom of the cliff had been Black Jade Stone that could only be found in the Middle Realm.

Chapter 555: “Heaven’s End Cliff (2)”

All the signs were telling them in no uncertain terms that the Dark Emperor’s tomb was highly possibly located beyond the Heaven’s End Cliff, and all the members of the Twelve Palaces that had been mercilessly murdered and their families rooted out had actually mapped out the terrain at the bottom of the Heaven’s End Cliff.

Otherwise, with the overwhelming might of the Twelve Palaces, it was impossible that they were still unable to find the Dark Emperor’s tomb if it had been anywhere else.

But if the place was completely filled with traps and covered completely in impenetrable fog, a complete and precise map would be needed to locate the place.

“Mu Qian Fan mentioned that some time ago, someone had sought them out to entrust them with the mission to go investigate the situation below the Heaven’s End Cliff. That would mean that those people could possibly hold a portion of the map. Were they from the Twelve Palaces or someone working for them? Or maybe, the person who sought Mu Qian Fan out was the person in the Zephyr Academy who holds the map?” Fei Yan rubbed at his chin as his brow creased deep in thought.

“It should be one of the powers beholden to the Twelve Palaces here in the Lower Realm.” Jun Wu Xie said resolutely, sounding very sure of herself.

“Why?” Fei Yan sat up surprised.

Jun Wu Xie replied: “The Twelve Palaces are still trying all ways and means to complete their collection of the maps, so that naturally means that they strongly suspect that the Dark Emperor’s tomb is at the bottom of Heaven’s End Cliff, and that they are aware of the vile conditions of the terrain down there, so they would not be so dumb as to get Mu Qian Fan and his band of

brothers to go find out the precise location of the place. If my guess is correct, the Twelve Palaces are not entirely sure whether the Dark Emperor's tomb is at the bottom of the Heaven's End Cliff and they are only guessing and hence, they have not made any significant and obvious moves towards the place. This recent expedition must have been the work of someone from one of the palaces, who managed to trace the clues to the Heaven's End Cliff and gave orders to their contracted powers here. Meanwhile, the person who received the orders was not willing to carry it out himself and entrusted the task to Mu Qian Fan and his band to scout out the place."

Jun Wu Xie thought a moment before she continued: "According to what Mu Qian Fan said, the person who entrusted him with the mission is made aware of the dangers below the Heaven's End Cliff now and I do not think he will be making any other moves in the near future."

The Heaven's End Cliff, was just a guess by the Twelve Palaces and they were not able to ascertain that fact for sure. Hence, they did not dare to pour all their strength into place filled with untold dangers.

Considering all that, people from the Twelve Palaces must have gone to the Heaven's End Cliff before this but the result might not have been much better than Mu Qian Fan and his brothers. Those rumours about the Heaven's End Cliff must have been spread by the Twelve Palaces themselves in order to draw people who did not know the truth to seek it by setting forth towards the Heaven's End Cliff, to provide them with more clues about the place.

"So, should we go take a look at the Heaven's End Cliff then?" Qiao Chu was feeling a little excited. If the Dark Emperor's tomb was really at the Heaven's End Cliff, even if they had to stay there for a decade, they would do it to find the Dark Emperor's tomb!

Hua Yao admonished gently: "You are looking at it too simply. If the Dark Emperor's tomb can be located so easily at the bottom of

the Heaven's End Cliff, then the Twelve Palaces would not be so anxious. Mu Qian Fan had said as well, that eleven of them had gone down to the bottom of the Heaven's End Cliff and had stayed there for only two days, but had moved only a mere hundred meters into the place. Only one had come out alive from the eleven people and that should give you an idea of how dangerous the bottom of the Heaven's End Cliff is. Without a complete map of the area, making your way into that place will only result in certain death."

He was not reluctant to go, but there were many other considerations to make.

If all of them were to die at the Heaven's End Cliff, there would be no one to exact revenge for the cruel injustice done upon their parents.

Qiao Chu quietened down. He knew what Hua Yao was saying was right.

Jun Wu Xie squeezed on Lord Meh Meh's little hoof and said with her eyes lowered: "We can go, not absolutely necessary to locate the Dark Emperor's tomb. Seeing for ourselves the actual situation in the bottom of the Heaven's End Cliff beforehand might still be a good idea."

Chapter 556: “Heaven’s End Cliff (3)”

“We can do that..... But we don’t know where the Heaven’s End Cliff is.....” Qiao Chu said, scratching his head.

Hua Yao suddenly laughed, and he turned to look at Jun Wu Xie, his eyes showing sudden understanding.

“The reason you wanted to save Mu Qian Fan was for this reason?”

Jun Wu Xie nodded.

Qiao Chu was a little befuddled and luckily Hua Yao was willing to explain it to him. “The fact that Little Xie was willing to save Mu Qian Fan’s life was because only Mu Qian Fan knew where the Heaven’s End Cliff was. More than that, he had even gone down to the bottom of the cliff and he knows more about the Heaven’s End Cliff than anyone else. If we can bring him along with us, then going to the Heaven’s End Cliff will not be a difficult task. Just as Little Xie said, we need not rush ourselves to go locate the Dark Emperor’s tomb, but to go down for a look, to ascertain if that is a possible target would be good enough.”

Qiao Chu was suddenly enlightened and he turned to Jun Wu Xie with a look of utmost admiration.

“Little Xie, aren’t you being a bit too smart, you actually thought that far ahead?” He had thought that Jun Wu Xie saw the pitiable state that Mu Qian Fan was in and that had brought out the benevolence in her, and did not expect the little lass to have planned so far ahead.

Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow, but did not reply.

“Actually,..... There is one more thing I would like to speak to you guys about.” Hua Yao expression suddenly became hesitant.

The smile on Qiao Chu’s face faded as well. “What Brother Hua wants to talk about is about Little Zhuo isn’t it?”

Hua Yao nodded.

“Why would Fan Zhuo know about the Black Jade Rock and Black Silver? This really puzzles me. I do not mean to be suspicious of him but the fact that he knows about those things seems rather queer.” Hua Yao and the others had lived in the Lower Realm for quite a period of time and they are aware of what things the people of the Lower Realm know and what they do not know.

Fan Zhuo’s knowledge had definitely crossed the boundaries of what a person from the Lower Realm would know.

Although they had not known each other for long, but Hua Yao and the others had felt that Fan Zhuo was a rather nice and this was the only thing that they did not understand.

“Hmm..... he is the son of the Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy, could it be possible that the person in the Zephyr Academy that the Twelve Palaces are in contact with is the Headmaster himself? Hence, Fan Zhuo had heard a few things about the Middle Realm from those people?” Qiao Chu was really reluctant to think of Fan Zhuo in a bad light as he had found Fan Zhuo to be rather pleasing to his eye. Fan Zhuo was even running all around to help them forge their spirit rings and suspecting him was something he did not want to do.

“That might be possible.” Hua Yao nodded his head. If that was the case, it would justify how Fan Zhuo came to know of Black Jade Rock and Black Silver and it would answer all their doubts.

Previously, the person in the Qing Yun Clan that the Palace of Fire Demons was in contact with was Ke Cang Ju and didn’t Ke Cang Ju gain possession of the Lone Smoke?

“If it really is with Fan Zhuo’s father, we will have to remember to be a bit more polite when we go ask for it in the future.” When Qiao Chu was speaking those words, his eyes had inadvertently turned to look at Jun Wu Xie.

He could still remember vividly what kind of atrocities Jun Wu Xie had been capable of in the Qing Yun Clan.

But Jun Wu Xie seems completely unaffected, her face a sea of calm.

“But, before we are sure of the facts, we should not speak a single word of it to Little Zhuo.” Qiao Chu said consciously. Fan Zhuo had been a great companion so far and if Fan Zhuo realised that the real reason they all were here at the Zephyr Academy was to steal his father’s map, he would definitely be heartbroken.

Hua Yao nodded in agreement and even Fei Yan approved of it.

Obviously, they saw Fan Zhuo as a sickly and weak, naive and innocent little youth.

However.....

Jun Wu Xie secretly bit on her lips.

How naive.....

Chapter 557: “Heaven’s End Cliff (4)”

The few companions finalised their plans and made preparations to set aside time for a trip to the Heaven’s End Cliff after the forging of their spirit rings.

But before that, they had to heal up Mu Qian Fan’s body.

And that important task fell once again upon the shoulders of Jun Wu Xie.

In order to extract the Black Silver such a large piece of Black Jade Rock, it required a quite a long period of time. After Fan Zhuo and Rong Ruo negotiated on the price, they left the Black Jade Rock at the smithy and left.

No one would recognise what that was anyway and they were not worried that anyone would want to steal it.

After they returned to the inn, they all busied about with their own tasks and no one mentioned a word about the Heaven’s End Cliff.

Just as it was getting dark, Jun Wu Xie went out and searched everywhere for things she needed to concoct her medicines and elixirs. But as no one cultivated elixirs in the Zephyr Academy, so such items were not too popular in Chan Lin Town, and not many people carried those goods.

After much searching, Jun Wu Xie finally managed to find a small and simple stove for cultivating elixirs in a tiny shop. The stove was only palm sized and made out of pure copper. It was poorly made but would serve its purpose temporarily.

After making another trip to the medicinal shop where she purchased some herbs, Jun Wu Xie went back to the inn and started on her study of the poison in Mu Qian Fan’s flesh.

She worked through the night, without rest. When Hua Yao knocked requesting to enter her room in the morning, he found

her standing with a few medicinal bottles in her hands when she came to answer the door. She gave him one quick glance and went on with her tasks.

“Qiao Chu wanted me to come ask you when would we be going over to the auction house again.” Hua Yao was highly interested in what Jun Wu Xie was busying herself with as he had never seen Jun Wu Xie concocting her medicine. He had always been deeply curious about this young tiny sized youth, who possessed such exemplary medical skills and was even able to cultivate amazing elixirs.

“Today.” Jun Wu Xie replied simply.

Upon saying that, she put down all the things in her hands, and retrieved some elixirs and spirit stones out from her cosmos sack before dumping them on the table. She pointed at the elixirs and gave a simple explanation of their effects to Hua Yao, before she wrapped them all up in a bundle and shoved it into Hua Yao’s arms.

“Sell all of them.” Jun Wu Xie said curtly.

Just selling off the spirit stones might not really be enough to cover her expenses. After Jun Wu Xie returned to the Zephyr Academy, she intended to acquire a complete set of tools for the cultivation of elixirs and since the Chan Lin Town did not have a store specialised in that, she would have to have them custom made and that would cost her another tidy sum.

With the additional cost that the herbs required would bring, the expenditure would come up to be rather significant.

Hua Yao’s face was looking rather confused as he stared at the bunch of elixirs that Jun Wu Xie had shoved into his arms. After hearing her introduction of them, he stood rooted to the ground and did not move a single step.

“You..... really want to sell all these?” All these elixirs, if he were

to judge, were rather good. Although they could not compare to those Heaven defying ones that Jun Wu Xie had sold before the gates of the Zephyr Academy before, these elixirs nevertheless still had very rare and exemplary effects.

So many elixirs and she was willing to sell them all off without even blinking?

“Mmm. I only have this much now.” Jun Wu Xie nodded. Her stock of elixirs were running a bit low and she would not sell the good ones to others anyway. She would much rather leave them for people that she treasured and that would make more sense to her.

In the Zephyr Academy, the expenses were exorbitant and she intended to use the time she was in the academy to casually cultivate some elixirs and sell them off at the Chan Lin Auction House. She intended to run an initial trial run first this time.

If the results were good, she would then carry her plans further.

As she did not have a good grasp on the concept of money in this world, Jun Wu Xie was really easy with it.

Jun Wu Xie was being easy with it, but it was impossible for Hua Yao. If he did not know that all these elixirs clutched within his arms could be reproduced by Jun Wu Xie, he really wouldn't have wanted to part with a single elixir there.

Chapter 558: “Heaven’s End Cliff (5)”

“Go alone, and remember to alter your looks.” Jun Wu Xie did not forget to give Hua Yao that last reminder.

He Chang Le had known all of them in the Chan Lin Auction House the day before. If they were to appear once again in their real identities, many rumours would definitely begin to spread about them.

To avoid unnecessary trouble, Jun Wu Xie had to remind Hua Yao of that at least.

“I will.” Hua Yao said, rubbing at his face. He was thinking what kind of a look he should assume that would be suitable for the situation.

After all the preparations were made, Hua Yao transformed himself into a middle aged man and made his way towards the Chan Lin Auction House, where he entrusted all the items to He Chang Le.

By the time he got back, it was already lunchtime and all the companions gathered in Jun Wu Xie’s room as if in tacit understanding and waited for lunch.

“Brother Hua, all settled?” Qiao Chu asked upon seeing Hua Yao, walking over to him with a big smile on his face.

Fan Zhuo was greatly surprised though, when he saw the unfamiliar middle aged man and heard Qiao Chu address the man as “Brother Hua”.

Hua Yao did not feel he needed to hide before Fan Zhuo and raised his hand to cover his face slightly. The bones beneath his skin immediately started to change and in a blink, he had changed back into the alluringly handsome young youth once again.

Fan Zhuo’s eyes widened and his lips trembled, as his eyes looked at Hua Yao queerly.

“Little Zhuo. Calm yourself. Brother Hua’s art in altering his looks has always been so easy for him.” Fei Yan reassured Fan Zhuo, patting him on the shoulder, with a “this is perfectly normal” expression on his face.

“Bone Shifters’ Tribe.....” The three words suddenly tumbled out of Fan Zhuo’s mouth.

At that moment in the room, with the exception of Jun Wu Xie, the expression on all the faces of everyone present changed.

The Bone Shifters’ Tribe had been one of the major races of the Middle Realm. They possessed the ability to control the shape and size of the bones within their bodies. And that name was only known to people from the Middle Realm.

When they realised that Fan Zhuo knew about the Black Jade Stone and about Black Silver, they were still able to treat it as if Fan Zhuo had heard about them from the people of the Twelve Palaces who were in contact with his father. But he had even shown that he was able to recognise that Hua Yao was from Bone Shifters’ Tribe! Bone Shifters were few in numbers now and not widely seen even in the Middle Realm. Although people from the Twelve Palaces knew about the tribe but they would have no good reason to mention it to others here.

So how did Fan Zhuo know about it?

All their eyes were fixed onto Fan Zhuo. The surprise in Fan Zhuo’s eyes slowly faded and he lowered his head slightly. His pale handsome face was shrouded in shadow and they could not see the expression on his face.

However, just when everyone was getting anxious, Fan Zhuo suddenly covered his face with his hands, and a series of delirious laughter erupted from his throat.

“No wonder..... No wonder when I mentioned about the Black Jade Stone and Black Silver, you guys gave such a reaction..... No

wonder all of you are so interested in the Heaven's End Cliff..... I should have guessed it earlier....." Fan Zhuo could not stop laughing, his shoulders heaving with his unstoppable bout of laughter.

Suddenly, Fan Zhuo raised his head. There was no trace of the mirth that had just overtaken him. His clear eyes shone, but a chilling malice now filled them. Those eyes swept across Qiao Chu and each and everyone of them, his lips curled at the corners devilishly.

"Which of the Twelve Palaces do you guys belong to?"

Qiao Chu and the others froze in place. Fan Zhuo's words were sending all of them a signal.....

He knows of the Middle Realm, and he knows of the Twelve Palaces!

"Little Zhuo, what is happening here....." Seeing the abrupt change on Fan Zhuo's face, Qiao Chu did not know how to react at that moment.

That softspoken and gentle youth was suddenly able to show such strong malice in his eyes!

Fan Zhuo stared with those eyes at the expressions on Qiao Chu and the others. Suddenly, his expression changed again and reverted back to his usual gentle and amicable smile.

Chapter 559: “Heaven’s End Cliff (6)”

Fan Zhuo stared with those eyes at the expressions on Qiao Chu and the others. Suddenly, his expression changed again and reverted back to his usual gentle and amicable smile.

“I’m sorry if I frightened you guys.” Fan Zhuo looked at everyone apologetically.

Qiao Chu’s expression was rather wooden as he didn’t know how to react.

Hua Yao was frowning as he stared at Fan Zhuo. He had not wanted to mention it but Fan Zhuo’s reaction had been completely different from what he expected. If he had only heard things about the Middle Realm, then why did he react so strongly? And if he was not mistaken, Fan Zhuo eyes had earlier been filled with pure murder and hatred.

He hated the Twelve Palaces?

Why?

Hua Yao finally said: “You are from the Middle Realm.”

Fan Zhuo did not hide the fact and nodded his head. He looked at Hua Yao and the others and said smiling: “As you all are, am I wrong? Brother Hua, Dumb Qiao, Little Yan, Little Ruo..... and Little Xie? No no no..... Little Xie is not, because Little Xie did not react to my words in the slightest.”

Fan Zhuo rubbed his chin, his face split into a smile.

“Your guess is correct.” Hua Yao nodded and said.

“You hold a grudge against the Twelve Palaces?” Hua Yao asked, feeling a little puzzled. Why had the strong aura of malice earlier suddenly disappeared completely without a trace of it present now? The hatred within those eyes earlier were in no way less than what they all felt. But, why had it faded so fast?

“We cannot coexist.” Fan Zhuo’s smile grew wider but there was no joy in his eyes.

“Why?” Hua Yao persisted.

“For the same reason as all of you here. Isn’t that right?” Fan Zhuo said, laughing.

Hua Yao was surprised.

Fan Zhuo continued: “I had thought that you guys were from the Twelve Palaces, but when I had so obviously displayed such strong enmity earlier, all of you had not reacted strongly to it but had looked shocked instead and did not show any intentions of killing me. In the instant that you all knew that I had strong malicious intentions against the Twelve Palaces, none of you made a move against me, and that ultimately told me that you guys were not from the Twelve Palaces and I do not believe that the Twelve Palaces would have such genuine and sincere people like you among them.”

The malicious murder initially had been a test, and the results had made Fan Zhuo heave a sigh of relief.

Fortunately, they were not the enemy.

“You said you are the same as us, what did that mean?” A guess surfaced in Hua Yao’s mind and it made him a little anxious and it filled him with anticipation.

Fan Zhuo laughed a little and said: “Long ago, in their quest to locate the Dark Emperor’s tomb, the Twelve Palaces had sent out countless highly skilled exponents and among them, only a few of them finally found it. Those few people had come from different palaces and in order to suppress and curtail each other, they had drawn a portion of the map on each others’ back and returned to report on their mission. But they had not expected that what finally awaited their return was betrayal from the powers they served respectively. All of them were killed and even their families

were not spared.....”

Fan Zhuo’s smiley eyes were tinged with a slight trace of chill. His eyes swept over Hua Yao, Qiao Chu, Fei Yan and Rong Ruo once again, one after the other. “When the massacre was being carried out, one man secretly infiltrated among them and rescued the young children of those families. One among the children rescued had belonged to the Bone Shifters’ Tribe. If I am not wrong, all of you should be those children who were rescued from then?”

Fan Zhuo’s line of reasoning greatly shocked Hua Yao and the others. All of them looked at Hua Yao with a queer look, their eyes filled with shock and uncertainty.

“Then..... Who might you be?” He knew the history of the Middle Realm, and he was aware that the Twelve Palaces were searching for the Dark Emperor’s tomb. So, what was Fan Zhuo’s real identity!?

Fan Zhuo smiled bitterly.

“I am just an orphan abandoned at the Heaven’s End Cliff.”

Chapter 560: “Heaven’s End Cliff (7)”

The Twelve Palaces had sent out hordes of their men in those years and there had been no lack of smart and intelligent people among them. Although they had been loyal to the powers they served, they still retained a trace of rationality in their actions. Fan Zhuo’s parents had been such an example. They had reached the Dark Emperor’s tomb a step later than the family members of Hua Yao and the others’ had but had been forced to partake in their agreement with those who had reached earlier. They all had a portion of the map tattooed on their backs before they all returned to the Middle Realm.

But Fan Zhuo’s biological father had felt that something was not right. He did not bring Fan Zhuo and his wife back together with him but had settled them down temporarily nearby the Heaven’s End Cliff.

Alas, what awaited him when he returned back to the Middle Realm was a total nightmare.

He did not have the chance to go back and see his wife and child again. His whole family line was massacred together with him and Fan Zhuo’s mother had been killed right before his eyes while he had sustained severe injuries from the attack by the people of the Twelve Palaces and his body left in the forests to become feed for the carnivorous beasts.

Fortunately, Fan Qi had made it there in time and rescued the severely injured Fan Zhuo.

Fan Qi had been beholden to Fan Zhuo’s parents and Fan Qi had wanted to repay them for the benevolence he had received and decided to raise Fan Zhuo. But the severe injuries inflicted on Fan Zhuo’s body had deteriorated daily and in order to protect Fan Zhuo, Fan Qi had portrayed his own biological son to everyone else as his adopted child and claimed Fan Zhuo as his biological child

instead, to give him the best care he could.

It was also to prevent anyone from using his status as an adopted child and mistreat him in anyway.

However, Fan Zhuo's injuries from young stayed with him, making his life as he grew up to be one filled with pain and torment. Before he came to meet Jun Wu Xie, he had thought that there was no way he would live for much longer and no matter how much hatred he held in his heart for the Twelve Palaces, he did not possess the strength or power to change his fate.

If he was not even able to retain his own life, there was no way he would be able to fight the Twelve Palaces.

It was not until the appearance of Jun Wu Xie, that he saw that his life was about to take a complete change!

Fan Zhuo told the companions everything about himself. His candid revelation of his past greatly shocked Qiao Chu and the others.

Fan Zhuo had been right. They were all still fortunately alive and it was due to one man. Yan Bu Gui. Yan Bu Gui had hidden them all at the Phoenix Academy and successfully escaped from the persecution of the Twelve Palaces, but Fan Zhuo had been more unfortunate than them.

He had not only witnessed the killing of his mother with his own eyes, but had sustained heavy injuries from their attackers. They had injured him all the way into the core and it had made him live his life, greatly handicapped.

Qiao Chu and his companions were all only too aware of how thickly their hatred for their enemies ran within their hearts and completely understood why Fan Zhuo had tested their allegiance in such a manner earlier.

“But things have greatly changed and is completely different now. I noticed that all of you are intending to go find the Dark

Emperor's tomb, why?" Fan Zhuo was calm, the corners of his mouth slightly lifted in a slight smile, looking as if all that he had said had happened to someone else and not himself.

But Qiao Chu and the others could not forget, just a mere moment ago, the terrifying and unbridled hatred that had burned so brightly in Fan Zhuo's eyes.

"We need to become strong, and the Dark Emperor's tomb contains the most powerful magical items that exists in the Middle Realm. And once we find the Dark Emperor's tomb, we would definitely acquire enough strength to exact our revenge against the Twelve Palaces!" Qiao Chu exclaimed after drawing in a deep breath, not intending to hide anything.

Fan Zhuo laughed out loud.

"Not a bad plan, but the Dark Emperor's tomb would not be so easily located."

"However difficult it is, we have to give it a try. This is the only way we can attain enough strength to go against the Twelve Palaces." Hua Yao said resolutely.

Chapter 561: “Heaven’s End Cliff (8)”

Fan Zhuo raised an eyebrow and said: “If that’s the case, count me in as well.”

Qiao Chu’s face broke into a wide smile.

“You mean it?”

“Of course.” Fan Zhuo nodded and he turned to Jun Wu Xie. “Little Xie, you are not a lost orphan from the Twelve Palaces. Why are you involved in this?”

Jun Wu Xie raised her eyes and replied calmly: “To go home.”

Fan Zhuo gave a look of utter confusion.

Jun Wu Xie suddenly raised her hand and a mist appeared before her fingers, gradually coalescing at a spot beside her, forming into the shape of a tiny figure.

“MEH!!” Lord Meh Meh who had plopped lazily at the side without making a single sound suddenly stood up upon seeing the figure start to form up, its eyes brilliantly lit up!

[So... FRAGRANT!]

“Argh! Don’t bite me!” Little Lotus had just appeared and Lord Meh Meh had immediately pounced on him, pressing his soft chubby little body to the ground. They next saw the woolly ball that was Lord Meh Meh happily plopped upon Little Lotus, licking its little wet tongue incessantly upon Little Lotus’ tiny chubby face.

At that moment, Little Lotus broke into tears from the sudden “attack”.

He could feel the strong desire to chomp on him emanating strongly from Lord Meh Meh!

Plant type spirits were always highly sensitive to the desires of herbivores.

Fan Zhuo's eyes widened as he stared at Little Lotus who was being helplessly violated by Lord Meh Meh.

"Little Xie's ring spirit is a plant type spirit." Qiao Chu said helpfully.

It finally dawned on Fan Zhuo. Everyone in the Middle Realm knew exactly how much interest a plant spirit would attract from the Twelve Palaces. The innocent would be deemed criminal by the mere possession of a prized treasure others sought. Jun Wu Xie's plant based spirit would undoubtedly bring her endless persecution.

If she wanted to live, she had to become stronger than the Twelve Palaces and make them fear to dare lust after her ring spirit.

Fan Zhuo genuinely laughed out loud, his eyes absolutely sparkled.

"After all that's been said, everyone in this room are enemies of the Twelve Palaces?"

"That's right." Hua Yao replied, nodding affirmatively.

"Since that's the case, let's all retrieve the Dark Emperor's treasures and put them to good use!" Upon saying that, Fan Zhuo took out a brocade bag from his hip and opened it up. A old and tattered map drawn on skin lay open on the table.

From what they saw was showing on that map, it really looked very similar to the map they had with them!

Fan Zhuo explained: "My parents had climbed down the Heaven's End Peak together at that time. A portion of the map of the Dark Emperor's tomb had been drawn on my mother's back as well. After my father returned to the Twelve Palaces, he did not come back for quite a time. My mother suspected something had gone wrong and had the map cut out off her back and handed it to me to have it hidden properly. So, the map of the Dark Emperor's

tomb had never been complete from the beginning because the number of people who got to the Dark Emperor's tomb actually numbered eight, not seven."

And the last portion of the map to the Dark Emperor's tomb laid in the hands of Fan Zhuo, the only child who survived against all odds under the endless persecution of the Twelve Palaces.

With the knowledge of this newfound fact, Qiao Chu and the others found themselves in sudden shock.

"We had previously discovered that someone within the Zephyr Academy was in contact with the Twelve Palaces. The Twelve Palaces had given their own portions of the maps to the respective powers they were grooming in the Lower Realm. The piece you hold was not from the Twelve Palaces, so..... Does your father hold another one?" After their goals were aligned, Hua Yao saw no need to hold back their misgivings anymore.

Fan Zhuo shook his head.

"My adoptive father is not in contact with the Twelve Palaces. He knows my real identity and it is impossible that he will establish such a form of contact with them. So, if the information you received is true, then the person that has links with the Twelve Palaces will be someone else, and not my father."

If not Fan Qi, then who could it be?

Hua Yao and his companions found themselves suddenly having to rethink their options.

Chapter 562: “An Auction for the Filthy Rich (1)”

“Actually, if we really want to find out who it is, we do have a lead we can work on.” Fei Yan said suddenly.

“You mean Mu Qian Fan?” Rong Ruo asked, her brows raised.

Fei Yan nodded. “Mu Qian Fan said that someone gave them money and told them to go to the Heaven’s End Cliff. Moreover, Little Zhuo has already confirmed for us that the Dark Emperor’s tomb is indeed at below the Heaven’s End Cliff. That would mean that the person who commissioned Mu Qian Fan and his brothers to go there must be the same person who has links with the Twelve Palaces and he must have the map with him! Mu Qian Fan was more becoming a more valuable ally then they had expected. He was not only able to bring them to the Heaven’s End Cliff but would be able to provide them with more clues to identify the person within the Zephyr Academy who held the map.”

Fei Yan paused a moment before he turned to look at Jun Wu Xie and asked in a serious tone: “Little Xie, are you confident of curing Mu Qian Fan completely of his poison?”

Jun Wu Xie replied softly: “Yes.”

With Jun Wu Xie single worded reply, Fei Yan was undoubtedly convinced.

“Before that, we had better make a trip to the Heaven’s End Cliff and see what that place is all about. We still do not have a complete map of the place and although we would not be able to find the exact location of the Dark Emperor’s tomb, a better understanding of the area would definitely help us.” Hua Yao reasoned.

Everyone agreed with what Hua Yao said.

After their discussions came to a close, all of them parted and went about their own tasks.

There were two more days before the auction at the Chan Lin Auction House would be carried out and they would remain within Chan Lin Town during that period and Jun Wu Xie was intent on concocting the antidote for the poison within Mu Qian Fan's body.

The days passed quickly and the Chan Lin Auction House opened up its auction once more. And this time, before the auction itself, He Chang Le had hired people to spread the word throughout Chan Lin Town. The word was that in the upcoming auction, they would not only have the usual string of precious and unusual treasures, they also had a bunch of rare and priceless elixirs in their line up!

Many people who had not been really interested in the auction suddenly pricked their ears and rushed towards the auction house.

Rare and priceless elixirs, no matter the time, no matter the place, had always been in great demand. Although no details on what kind of elixirs they had were released, but based on the high standards of goods and items the Chan Lin Auction House had always managed to bring in for their auctions, it would not be common stuff.

This day, the Chan Lin Auction House was visibly more packed than usual. The auction had not even started and the ground floor was already filled to capacity, while all the private rooms on the second level were fully taken.

Fortunately Qiao Chu had come and spoken to He Chang Le the day before on their intention to attend and a room had been reserved for them.

When Jun Wu Xie and her companions reached the place, even the staircase leading up to the second level was filled with people. They had to squeeze past an immeasurable amount of people before they managed to get to the room reserved for them.

"Heavens! Does it need to be so crazy? The place is just too crowded today isn't it?" Qiao Chu was holding his shoes in his hands. While climbing up the steps earlier, both his shoes had been

stepped and stomped by the surging crowd and he had almost lost them. His quick reflexes had saved him and the still new shoes that he had bought just not too long ago.

The smiling servant allocated to their room served them their tea. Knowing that these were He Chang Le's honoured guests, his attitude was especially attentive.

“My Young Masters, you might not know it, but the items we have lined up for today's auction are much more interesting than usual. Besides the usual bunch of spirit stones, we have a dazzling line of exquisite and priceless elixirs which had drawn almost the whole town's people here. The auction itself has not started yet and this is not when we are most crowded. Once the auction starts, the place would be bursting at the seams.”

Chapter 563: “An Auction for the Filthy Rich (2)”

“Are elixirs really that popular with the people?” Qiao Chu asked while putting on his shoes, his eyes filling up with anticipation.

“You say! Under the skies, those able to concoct and cultivate good quality elixirs had only come from a few clans. Ever since the Qing Yun Clan suddenly disappeared, the supply of elixirs in the market had greatly diminished and those few other clans who had been overshadowed and their reputation as elixir producing places previously suppressed by the Qing Yun Clan had suddenly found their fortunes reversed, enjoying unsurpassed recognition and greatly revered. Even the common medical halls and shops selling herbs have seen the prices of elixirs increase in folds.” The servant saw that Qiao Chu was intrigued by the topic and prattled on non-stop.

The Qing Yun Clan might have been corrupted and they committed heinous deeds, but it had been an enormous clan and they had nevertheless provided the people with huge quantities of elixirs every month. Besides the elixirs produced by the twelve elders, the disciples in the Inner House had supplied a large quantity of elixirs and medicines to the people throughout the lands.

Although those elixirs and medicines might not be top grade, but compared to the common herbs and medicines sold in the medical halls and herb shops, they were of a much better quality. And the Qing Yun Clan’s reputation as the top clan throughout the lands had further made their supply of elixirs in high demand.

And thus, the disappearance of the Qing Yun Clan had suddenly caused a huge deficiency in the supply of elixirs.

Not only was the supply of top grade elixirs greatly reduced, but even elixirs one grade lower had their quantities greatly

diminished.

The inadequate quantities of elixirs had caused the people to place greater significance on purchasing all the diminishing supply of elixirs they could find.

Many of the clans that produced elixirs had long been allied or joined with various powers and the best of the elixirs they produced were always supplied to their allies and only a small portion that was in excess or of inferior quality would be released to be sold externally.

Besides those few clans, even individuals who excelled in producing medicine were either from prominent families themselves or recruited by the major powers as well, and the amount they could produce was even less.

Once a person highly skilled in producing medicine was discovered, people from different powers would immediately rush in to recruit them.

Buying quality elixirs and medicine had become a highly arduous task.

And it was due to this very reason, that when the Chan Lin Auction House had released news that they had elixirs available in their line up, it had drawn the attention of so many people. Within the vast auction house, the place was beginning to show signs of being unable to accommodate the crowd who had come forth to take part in the auction.

“If the Young Masters here are interested in the batch of elixirs, you are most welcome to make a bid for it during the auction. The boss has informed us previously about these elixirs. Due to the request of the client, the auction house would not be able to offer our honoured guests special privileges on them.” The servant noticed that Qiao Chu had seemed invariably interested in the elixirs and he explained apologetically.

If it had been something a little more common, He Chang Le might be able to use his position as the owner to open some doors of privilege for them, but not this time, and for such precious items.

Qiao Chu laughed and waved his hand at the servant, dismissing him from the room.

“If I was interested in them, you think I would need to buy them? I will only need to ask for them from Little Xie.” Qiao Chu stole a peek at the unaffected and unmoving Jun Wu Xie, his eyes narrowed into two crescents from his smile.

“Little Xie, wouldn’t you agree?”

Jun Wu Xie glanced briefly at him and turned away, refusing to grace such a dumb and senseless question with a reply.

Completely undeterred by Jun Wu Xie’s cold treatment, Qiao Chu cozied up against Hua Yao and asked: “Brother Hua, how many elixirs did Little Xie give you to sell at this auction?”

Hua Yao replied: “Seven bottles.”

“Seven bottles..... Hmm..... If one bottle sold for one hundred thousand taels, that will be seven hundred taels!!” Qiao Chu gulped at the figure, estimating the price based on the time they had “set up a con” in front of the Zephyr Academy gates previously.

Chapter 564: “An Auction for the Filthy Rich (3)”

“The elixirs this time are different from those before.” Jun Wu Xie said calmly, throwing a whole bucket of cold water on Qiao Chu.

That time at the gates of the Zephyr Academy had left her with no other choice or she would not have taken out those elixirs that could develop and improve veins and arteries.

“But, they would still fetch a hefty price wouldn’t they? Seven bottles should still at least fetch us a hundred thousand taels at least, wouldn’t it?” Qiao Chu asked, scratching his head, feeling a little less sure.

Jun Wu Xie shot him a glance. “Who told you that I am selling them by the bottle?”

“Huh?” Qiao Chu was even more confused.

Hua Yao shook his head helplessly. He could not bear to see Qiao Chu display his stupidity a moment longer.

“Little Xie gave me seven bottles of elixirs this time and there are five elixirs in each bottle. I have already discussed it with He Chang Le and he has agreed that the elixirs in every bottle would be individually auctioned, with a single pill each time.”

Qiao Chu nodded in confusion and after pondering on it for a long while, he only managed to ask one question.

“Will we earn a lot of money then?”

“.....” Hua Yao shot Qiao Chu a look of utter contempt, and decided not to waste his breath on the intellectually lacking dumbo.

Qiao Chu shrank back mortified as he rubbed his nose, suddenly feeling like he needed a drink of water.

More and more people arrived at the auction house till finally, they could not even shut the doors as people continued to try to squeeze themselves in.

This unprecedented situation was never seen before and it greatly surprised Jun Wu Xie who sat in the private room on the second level.

She did not know that elixirs was in such high demand. Although the response had been very overwhelming before the gates of the Zephyr Academy before, but those elixirs she had taken out then had Heaven defying effects that was unheard of in the world. The elixirs she had given to Hua Yao this time, though were rather good as well, but their effects could not compare in the least to those they sold before.

He Chang Le had only spread the word to the people that the Chan Lin Auction House would have elixirs in their lineup and had not mentioned a word on their effects and it had already incited such an overwhelming response.

Jun Wu Xie decided that she would have to give her elixirs a little bit more consideration.

All along, she had only intended for her elixirs to be given to the people of the Lin Palace and the Rui Lin Army and other than that, she did not spend much more time into her elixirs.

She was not able to return to the Lin Palace at the moment and her dwindling finances was becoming a huge problem to her.

She did not in the least expect that Qiao Chu and the others, who had been lived half their lives in abject poverty, to suddenly gain riches and prosperity.

So, if elixirs were really so hugely popular, would this mean that she would be able to profit from it for their expenses?

Jun Wu Xie decided to observe a little bit more before she made her conclusion.

They had eagerly waited for the auction to commence and the whole place was fully packed. Many of the people did not have seats and they were lined up against the walls at the side and back.....

The sight before him made He Chang Le smile endlessly, unable to close his mouth in joy.

Although the Chan Lin Auction House had always enjoyed a rather good reputation and strong support, they had never put up elixirs in their auctions before as there were no prominent elixir producing clans in their vicinity. The once small tiny town had grown prosperous all due to the Zephyr Academy and a big part of the town visitors were the disciples from the Zephyr Academy itself.

Just like today, looking through the crowd packed within the auction house, many of them were youths dressed in the uniforms of the Zephyr Academy. They had seemingly gathered here in groups, having arrived early to get themselves the best seats. And from the eager expressions on their faces, one could see the high anticipation they held for today's auction.

He Chang Le was very excited. Even he had not expected that a bunch of elixirs would draw so many people to the Chan Lin Auction House.

This was the biggest crowd he had ever seen in the history of the Chan Lin Auction House!

“Boss, can we begin?” The auctioneer asked one final time for He Chang Le's opinion, as he straightened out his clothes and made sure everything was in order.

Chapter 565: “An Auction for the Filthy Rich (4)”

He Chang Le turned and patted the man on the shoulder encouragingly to say: “This auction, would indefinitely influence the reputation of the Chan Lin Auction House. If with these elixirs, we are able to bring the Chan Lin Auction House up to the next level, it would be undeniably the best result for us. You must remember it well. You have to put up an outstanding performance today. The huge turnout today are all gunning straight for the elixirs. If we are able to satisfy them with our results today, when the client comes back to us, I will discuss it in detail with him to see if he can supply us with elixirs on a permanent basis. If everything goes well, our Chan Lin Auction House will not be constrained within just a tiny Chan Lin Town!”

“I will! I will most definitely put out my best tonight!” The man said confidently, as he pulled at his clothes once again in one final check.

“Go! The future of our auction house will be determined tonight!” He Chang Le stared with great anticipation at the crowd tightly packed together on the floor. Although the Chan Lin Auction House enjoyed a high reputation in this region, but they were inadvertently constrained here. If this time, their fame spread, then.....

He Chang Le was getting more excited the more he thought about it!

Once the auctioneer stepped onto the stage, a cheer erupted from the crowd. The intensity of the raucous cheer almost tore the roof off the Chan Lin Auction House.

Standing upon the stage, the auctioneer gulped. He was the leading auctioneer of the Chan Lin Auction House and he prided himself on his quick adaptability to changes. But upon seeing the

boisterous and noisy crowd before him, he could not help but feel a little weakness creep into his legs.

Jun Wu Xie sat, high up on the second level in her private room, as she stared at the noisy scene below, her eyes calm.

“Firstly, let me welcome you to the Chan Lin Auction House today. I believe that our honoured guests have already heard the news. The Chan Lin Auction House today, hold in our hands, a batch of the most precious and exquisite elixirs! The batch of elixirs entrusted to us number a significant amount and the effects they provide would most definitely be more than satisfactory. Let’s not hold you back with more chatter, I think all of you are more interested in what effects the elixirs hold for you! Without further delay, can we have the Chan Lin Auction House present to you the first elixir we have up for the auction? Bring it up!” The auctioneer announced in a deep voice, and the boisterous and rowdy crowd suddenly quietened.

All eyes were inexorably drawn to the stage in front and their sights fixed upon the item being brought up.

A adorable and alluring lady swayed her hips suggestively as she carried a brown tray and walked up onto the stage.

At that moment, the people on the floor were unconcerned on how alluring the beautiful lady was. Their eyes were glued to the small brocade box lying upon the tray!

“This is the Spirit Intensifying Elixir! Once ingested, it will enable the user to gain a temporary growth in their spiritual powers, achieving a breakthrough in the level of their spiritual powers! The effect lasts for one day and within that day, the user will experience might of the spirit power they had never attained before and can be used by the user to defeat powerful opponents they had never been able to take on before! Although its effects last only a day, but it is invaluable when used appropriately at the most critical times that will save your life!” The auctioneer generously

explained, throwing them a friendly reminder on how its use would be most efficient.

And the generous introduction had made the crowd on the floor go wild!

As the levels of their spiritual powers go higher, their speed of their growth in spiritual power would inevitably slow significantly. Many people had been stuck in their current spirit levels for several years and for some, even more than a decade. Over the slow passing throughout the endless years, the snail paced progress gained in their spiritual powers had made many of them fall into despair. And the chance for them to experience power they had yearned for but never achieved was undoubtedly a great temptation.

The biggest draw about the elixir though, was what the auctioneer had helpfully told them..... To save their own life.

Irregardless whether it was in a battle, or while out on an expedition, an elixir that enabled the user to gain more power in an instant was an irreplaceable treasure indeed!

Chapter 566: “An Auction for the Filthy Rich (5)”

Elixirs like this, might not be that big a temptation to the common people.

But when placed before the disciples of the Zephyr Academy.....

It became an irresistible weapon for them to show off their powers!!

For a day, they would gain powers that had never experienced before and the elixir would enable them to get out any tight situations in future Spirit Hunts. Heaven knows, how much it would mean to the disciples who had just managed to claw their way through the last grueling Spirit Hunt, where they were tormented by the many powerful Spirit Beasts. How many times had they found their own powers inadequate and were forced to run away in fear from Spirit Beasts that had not been all that powerful in the first place? In addition to that, the disciples knew that many of their fellow disciples had even lost their lives in that Spirit Hunt due to the lack of spiritual powers as well.

The Spirit Intensifying Elixir would undoubtedly become an irreplaceable talisman that would save their lives!

The instantaneous increase of their spiritual powers would give them the ultimate boost to their speed, agility and become much more nimble. When faced with danger, they would be able to gain extraordinary strength to escape and keep themselves alive!

Almost at the same moment that the auctioneer finished his introduction, the Zephyr Academy's disciples on the floor could not contain themselves and started to fidget, unable to remain in their seats properly.

They were all craning their necks to see, ears pricked to hear the starting price, eager to place their bids for the amazing elixir.

With the Spirit Intensifying Elixir in hand, they would have to worry about getting themselves killed by Spirit Beasts in future Spirit Hunts and would be able to gain extraordinary powers beyond their fellow disciples at the most critical of times! Even if it was just for a day, they would be able to take on stronger Spirit Beasts that they would not dare face usually!

And the better quality spirit stones they would gain might allow them a better score in the Spirit Hunt which would ultimately win them a bigger part of the allocated resources of the Zephyr Academy making their lives in the academy in the future a whole lot easier!

“The quantity of Spirit Intensifying Elixirs we have available for this auction numbers a grand total of five. Every individual elixir has a set base price of fifty thousand taels. Now, let us the begin the bidding for the first elixir we have up for auction.” Seeing the enthusiasm in the crowd on the floor, the auctioneer standing upon the stage was silently relieved. As he remembered He Chang Le’s prior reminder to him, he suddenly felt endlessly motivated!

“Whoa, fifty thousand each. If we manage to sell them all, that would mean we would have at least two hundred and fifty thousand taels right?” Qiao Chu said, licking at his suddenly dry lips.

Fei Yan shot him a depreciating glance and said: “Two hundred and fifty thousand taels? You are really just too naive.”

Qiao Chu blinked blankly at Fei Yan. Before he could even utter a word, the floor below suddenly exploded.

“Sixty thousand!”

“Seventy thousand!”

“One hundred thousand!”

The youths jumped up one after another. Without a single exception, they were all dressed in the uniform of the Zephyr

Academy.

As a place that was reputed to have only the obscenely and filthy rich as their disciples, all those who were able to don themselves in the uniform of the Zephyr Academy wore upon themselves a undisputed symbol that showed off the vast riches and immense wealth of the families and powers behind them.

Money in the tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of taels was not that big a deal to them, especially if what they were purchasing would ultimately save their own lives, the money was deemed to be of scant concern.

In the blink of an eye, the first Spirit Intensifying Elixir's price had rocketed to a staggering one hundred and twenty thousand taels!

Qiao Chu's eye bulged and almost popped out of his head!

[Aren't these youths here in this house, being a little extreme?]

[Sweet Heavens, the bids jump in tens of thousands, are they talking about grains of sand here! ?]

Very soon, the first Spirit Intensifying Elixir was won by a disciple of the Zephyr Academy with a bid of one hundred and thirty thousand taels. After the oppressively throwing of such a staggering sum of money, the youth still stood up in glee and waved proudly to all the other Zephyr Academy's youths with the auction house.

His incorrigible actions taunted everyone there, stoking the fire within the hearts of all the other youths!

They were all from the same academy, they knew they must not lose again!

The level of their skills were dependant on how gifted they were and they could not change that fact. But when it came to comparing riches..... They were no easy pushovers either.....

After the first youth managed to win the first Spirit Intensifying Elixir, and his infuriating taunts, the auctions that were carried out after that went into a fierce and fiery bidding war among the countless filthy rich disciples.

From the second elixir onwards, the price of each and every Spirit Intensifying Elixir went beyond one hundred at fifty thousand taels. The staggering amounts made all the outsiders from other powers quickly decide the elixirs were greatly beyond them.

Chapter 567: “An Auction for the Filthy Rich (6)”

The Spirit Intensifying Elixir’s effects might be rather amazing but it was limited to a single use. Splurging over a hundred thousand taels on something like that could only be achieved by the Zephyr Academy’s filthy rich disciples, who had too much money for their own good.

In a short period of time, all five of the Spirit Intensifying Elixirs were swept up cleanly and all the winning bids were made by disciples from the Zephyr Academy, denying the opportunity to all the other people present.

Once again, the people of Chan Lin Town witnessed the bold and astounding spending power of the Zephyr Academy’s disciples!

In a private room on the second level, Qiao Chu was doing the sums for the money gained from the sale of the Spirit Intensifying Elixirs, his eyes wide and he could not stop smiling.

“Little Xie, how long a period do you need to make those elixirs?” Qiao Chu asked Jun Wu Xie, his eyes sparkling with interest.

Jun Wu Xie thought a moment and replied: “One day.”

Qiao Chu gasped, and then said with a laugh: “Haha! You are able to produce one elixir a day? Ha ha! Wouldn’t that mean you would have one hundred and thirty thousand taels to spend every day?”

Jun Wu Xie calmly replied: “A stove bakes twenty pills a time.”

“.....” Qiao Chu’s jaw hung open, and he could not close it.

Even Fei Yan sucked in a big gasp, standing at the side.

Soon, the Chan Lin Auction House brought out the second item they were going to put up for auction onto the stage. It was another type of elixir.

And the effects and function of this elixir was much better than the Spirit Intensifying Elixir.

Encouraged by the results they had achieved for the Spirit Intensifying Elixir, the auctioneer was feeling confident enough to exaggerate a little bit more.

“This is called the All Dispelling Elixir, it can counter hundreds of types of poison and toxins.....” The auctioneer had not even finished his sentence when he was suddenly drowned out by the deafening noise that erupted out from the crowd on the floor.

[Counters most poisons!]

[That’s a lot more useful than the Spirit Intensifying Elixir!]

It was extremely hard to guard against poison users and some ring spirits were naturally born equipped with poison. If they were attacked by such spirits, they would be put at a serious disadvantage in battle. Moreover, many Spirit Beasts were capable of poison attacks as well, especially those that belonged to the higher grades, and the poison’s potency increases the higher the grades were.

If the Spirit Intensifying Elixir which gave them a temporary boost to their spiritual powers was an irresistible weapon to carry with them, then the All Dispelling Elixir would most definitely qualify to be a real and undisputed talisman that would keep them alive!

At that moment, not only the disciples of the Zephyr Academy were excitedly roused, but all the other people from different major powers who came to Chan Lin Town to try to recruit the Zephyr Academy’s disciples could not contain themselves any longer!

An elixir with such incredible effects, no matter to who that person was, would be considered to be extremely hard to come by!

The starting bid for the All Dispelling Elixir was higher than the

Spirit Intensifying Elixir. Every individual elixir would start at one hundred thousand taels.

And this time, not only the disciples of the Zephyr Academy were taking part in the bidding, anyone who had strong financial backing from the various powers behind them did not want to lose out on the chance to possess such an incredible elixir.

The price for the first All Dispelling Elixir was quickly pushed up to two hundred and fifty thousand taels very quickly!

The price being shouted out by the excited auctioneer almost made Qiao Chu jump up in joy. He soon discovered that the price achieved for the items put up for auction was greatly influenced by the auctioneer's skills in fanning the crowd. Every time when the bids seemed to stagnate for a while, the auctioneer would always step up to incite and rouse the crowd, exaggerating on the miraculous effects and never available before properties of the rarest of elixirs, and excite the crowd once again to a new level of fervour, and the price would instantaneously climb up another fold.

“Little Xie, I think the elixirs we sold in front of the Zephyr Academy's gates that time were given away too cheaply! If we had brought it here to the Chan Lin Auction House, we would most definitely have gotten ourselves at least twice that price! !” Qiao Chu said excitedly, his eyes wide, seemingly caught up in the auctioneer's incitement.

Although the Chan Lin Auction House wasn't really considered to be a big establishment, but this auctioneer they had with them was rather good at his job. His ability to sway and manipulate the crowd was a real eye opener to the companions watching from above.

Jun Wu Xie nodded slightly. She had not expected that the elixirs would be so well received. Although besides the fact that Jun Wu Xie's elixirs were of a high grade, a large part of its popularity was

due to the gift of the gab of the auctioneer standing on the stage, and his ability to drum up the atmosphere, driving the crowd into a heated fervour, where they willingly raised up their bids, throwing their money to win the item their heart desired.

Chapter 568: “An Auction for the Filthy Rich (7)”

“Say, can the All Dispelling Elixir really dispel all poisons? Wouldn’t it cure Mu Qian Fan if we just give him one?” Qiao Chu asked suddenly.

Jun Wu Xie shook her head. “The elixir I gave him the other day was the All Dispelling Elixir. The elixir is effective on common poisons but the poison that Mu Qian Fan is inflicted with came from the Middle Realm and the All Dispelling Elixir is not able to neutralize it.”

Qiao Chu was quickly enlightened and nodded before he asked once more: “For the All Dispelling Elixir, how long do you take to make them?”

Jun Wu Xie was about to reply when Qiao Chu suddenly put up his hand and said: “No...wait! Don’t tell me. It’s better I do not know, or I don’t think my heart can take it.”

The price for the All Dispelling Elixir was higher than the Spirit Intensifying Elixir and for someone who was so used to not having a single copper on him, he was rather terrified of what Jun Wu Xie would say in reply, like producing tens of the elixirs in a day.

Jun Wu Xie gave up and decided to save her breath.

If Qiao Chu only knew, those Heaven defying elixirs that Jun Wu Xie had sold before the gates of the Zephyr Academy before, that she had made one hundred thousand of them in a month.....

Qiao Chu might very well have died on the spot from shock.

Jun Wu Xie’s elixirs were brought out for auction batch after batch, and the prices grew higher and higher. As long as anyone who was present had money to splurge, all of them took part in the fierce bidding war. The fiery atmosphere within the auction house reached a new crescendo with every passing moment and the

words from the auctioneer on stage roared, a endless torrential river, constantly stirring up the emotions, drawing the crowd to raise their bids, mindlessly throwing their money for the items on auction, faces contorted in excitement, as if possessed.

Backstage, He Chang Le's facial muscles were almost cramping up from smiling and he was already struggling to stand upright. But he could not make himself leave the scene, and hollered for the servants to bring him a chair, so he could watch the show, in a slightly more comfortable position.

Following the auction closely, the third and fourth batches of elixirs were soon completely cleaned out.

The last type of elixir was soon brought up onto the stage slowly, under the watchful eyes of the capacity crowd on the floor.

The auctioneer on stage was already bathed in sweat and his clothes were soaked. His face was flushed red with excitement and he did not feel the least bit tired or exhausted. When the fifth type of elixir was brought up on stage, he gathered himself together once again, to give it his best introduction.

“What we have here next, is also the last batch of elixirs we have today. The effects these elixirs give..... I guarantee it here, cross my heart, way exceeds anything we have ever procured! These elixirs are called..... Hibernation Elixirs! No matter how severely wounded one became, as long as they still breathe, swallow this elixir and it would enable the person to fall into a state of suspended animation for three days! The three days the elixir buys you, would be most invaluable and the most critical period to the severely wounded!”

The huge hall within the auction house fell deadly silent.

Every single pair of eyes were staring unwaveringly at the ultimate life saver on the tiny tray, the Hibernation Elixir!

Entering a state of suspended animation, would inadvertently

gain one more time to seek treatment or rescue. Although they would not be healed by swallowing the elixir, but the elixir would allow them to cling on persistently and allow them another chance to live just before Death's door.

The world was filled with mishaps and unexpected circumstances. Confrontations were endless, and anyone could suddenly find themselves staring death in their face.

And the Hibernation Elixir, would pull them back and buy them three whole days to fight for their lives!

For those afflicted with long term chronic illnesses, and those severely wounded, these people would find themselves in graver need for the Hibernation Elixir than the average man!

“To be honest, I myself would very much like to bid for this Hibernation Elixir. It would be my last chip to protect the one and only life I possess. The starting bid for every single Hibernation Elixir is two hundred thousand taels. I will make just one exception this time. I will make a first bid of two hundred and ten thousand taels, and if everyone would allow me the honour, this very elixir, would be retained for myself.” For the first time, the auctioneer had taken an unprecedented move, and his expression was almost seen to be in glee.

If only those very words had not been spoken out loud, once spoken, the crowd roared once again!

Usually, people from the auction house itself were not allowed to partake in the bidding for the items put up for auction. And as the leading auctioneer, he must have been already numbed with the countless rare and precious treasures he had seen. And now that the auctioneer himself had been tempted and placed a bid for the item, how could the crowd still sit back and not do anything?

The next moment, the crowd exploded and the auction reached a new climax!

Chapter 569: “A Killer Youth (1)”

The next moment, the crowd exploded and the auction reached a new climax!

Two hundred thousand was the starting bid and the price climbed up at a crazy speed!

The speed that the price was raised rocketed at a pace never seen before!

It was only when the price for the first Hibernation Elixir broke the five hundred thousand taels mark, that the pace began to slow.

Five hundred thousand taels for a single elixir had already reached the price reserved for the most premium of elixirs, and previously, only the Qing Yun Clan's elixirs had ever commanded that price range.

If it increased anymore, the price would be beyond the reach of many of the people here.

The auctioneer saw that the bids had stopped coming in and knew it had reached its peak. He shouted out the last bid three times in succession and was about to slam his hammer down to seal the deal when a clear voice suddenly rang out!

“One million taels!”

That voice, had come from one of the private rooms on the second level. At the same moment that that voice had sounded, everyone's head had raised up and looked at the source where the voice had come from!

Within that private room, four attractive and good looking men were seated, and they were well dressed in expensive clothes. The one that spoke was the youngest one among them and looked to be only about fifteen or sixteen years of age. He was a handsome looking youth with stunning features. However, his regal demeanor made people feel afraid to ever desecrate the ground he

stood.

The attractive looking youth swept his disdainful gaze over the crowd on the first level. The utter contempt in his gaze for the mass of people below made everyone shiver as a urge to seek escape grew in their hearts.

The auctioneer on the stage stood speechless, completely shocked.

In his close to a decade of being an auctioneer with the Chan Lin Auction House, he had never sold an item for such an incredulous price!

One single elixir, for an astounding one million tael!?

The hand holding the auctioneer's hammer trembled visibly.

"Will there be any other bids?" The attractive looking youth asked as he cast his indifferent gaze at the massive crowd of people, his mouth turned up in a lazy and smug smirk.

The whole auction house fell deathly silent. After a while, the auctioneer suddenly hurried to call out three times for bids when he saw the impatient gaze of the attractive looking youth staring at him. When he was certain that no other bids were forthcoming, he raised his hammer and sealed the price for the first Hibernation Elixir.

After the hammer landed, the atmosphere in the auction house suddenly became a little queer.

Those within the crowd who saw the first Hibernation Elixir slip out of their grasp silently gritted their teeth and cast their eyes upwards, staring into the private room on the second level, feeling rather disgruntled about the whole situation.

[Was that little lad that dumb? That he would blow such a huge sum of money on a single elixir?]

[It must be true that the foolish were blessed with money. No

matter, there are four more of those elixirs coming right up and they need not rush.]

However, all those people soon found their highly anticipated heart's desire was beyond their reach.

The auctioneer had just announced the starting bid for the second elixir when the youth in the same private room quickly made an unbelievable bid for one million taels once more!

For all four of the subsequent elixirs, he made a astounding bid of one million taels for each of them, forcing the people in the crowd to visibly gasp to catch their breaths.

All five Hibernation Elixirs had fallen into the hands of that single young youth!

Qiao Chu secretly admired the youth who had been so generously carefree with such an astounding amount of money and said to his companions, "I had thought that I had seen the most ludicrous and insane when Little Xie spent money before, and I never would have thought that I would meet someone more insane than her! Five million taels! Does money just flow down the river into his house!?"

Jun Wu Xie glared at Qiao Chu and said simply: "I am not in the least bit insane."

That chill from that glare reached Qiao Chu and he immediately sobered up. He hurriedly poured out a cup of water and solicitously offered it to Jun Wu Xie to say: "I wasn't really talking about you there, I was referring to that guy over there."

Jun Wu Xie accepted the proffered water and took a sip out of it.

Qiao Chu finally gave a big sigh of relief.

Meanwhile, on the floor in the auction house, the atmosphere was becoming rather weird.

The people from the various powers present had set their sights

on acquiring one of the Hibernation Elixirs from the five available and they had not expected someone to dump such astronomical sums of money so carelessly to deprive them completely.

At that moment, their anger could distinctly be felt!

Chapter 570: “A Killer Youth (2)”

A few groups of people marched up to the second level aggressively and kicked open the doors leading into the private room the attractive looking youth was in. They said in an angry tone: “You brat! You’re being too arrogant here! Five Hibernation Elixirs, can you finish them all!?”

The youth glanced casually at the group of people who had just rushed in and his lips curled up into a sneering smile. The other three men who were with the youth sat back quietly, sipping at their tea, not even bothering to look at the group of people who had just barged in.

“I can afford it, and was happy to bid for them, what can you do to me? If you really wanted them so much, you could have used your money and outbid me. You have my word, as long as any of you bid anything above one million taels, even if it is only by one tael, I will not raise my bid.” The youth said, with his arms crossed, as he challenged the group of intruders.

“You think you’re all that great just because you have money?” The men were driven speechless and were feeling their rage rise within their chests. Their fists were tightly clenched as they fumed. One million taels. How would they have so much money? Most of the people from the various powers present had only a few hundred thousand taels each with them, where were they going to get the money to outbid the youth?

“Not too shabby, at least compared to people who can’t afford to pay and then resorts to anger and intimidation, I’m a little better.” The youth said all these with a smirk, his tone highly arrogant.

In a moment, the eyes of the burly men in the group suddenly turned red at the youth’s scorn and disdain!

All these happenings were plainly visible from another private room where Jun Wu Xie and her companions were in.

Seeing that the young youth had stirred up the wrath of the group of men, Qiao Chu asked a little eagerly: "Little Xie, people are trying to bully your best customer. Should I go help him out?" He rubbed at his fists as he asked, eager for a little bit of action.

Jun Wu Xie raised her eyes, and she turned her cold gaze to look at the four people in the other private room before she said: "That is the Chan Lin Auction House's customer."

They had nothing to do with her.

"I would advise you to stay out of other people's business." Fei Yan chided softly, placing a hand on Qiao Chu's shoulder as he pointed with his chin at the other private room.

Qiao Chu turned to look and saw a figure sail out over the railing from that private room, falling heavily onto the auctioneer's stage, his head broken open upon the steps from the impact and blood flowed down the steps like a river!

Qiao Chu's eyes widened in surprise and he raised his head to look into the other private room again. He had not seen when the youth had made his move, every single one of the men in the group who had barged into the room were thrown out over the railing one after another!

The private rooms were only on the second level and rightfully, people would not die from falling from that height. But all of it seemed to have been done on purpose by the youth when all the men's' limbs were first broken before being thrown over the railing and it seemed frighteningly too coincidental that all them men had fallen with the backs of their heads hitting the edges on the steps first which killed them all instantly!

In a blink of an eye, lives were being taken so carelessly and mercilessly!

In that series of happenings, the smile had not left the youth's face once and the smile had grown as he carried out the senseless

massacre, becoming more and more intense, without showing a single morsel of remorse or sympathy. All of it was like nothing more than a game to the youth.

What he killed, were mere insects.

Qiao Chu suddenly sobered up. That youth's methods were really extraordinarily malicious!

In a quick flash, all the men who had barged into the private room had all been thrown downstairs, killed in an instant.

The bloody and gory scene immediately drove the crowd on the ground level into sudden horror and everyone screamed and tried to escape under the blood filled stench in the air. For those who had been sitting at the front row, they had found themselves suddenly covered in a gory mess from the bloody splatter when the men's heads had exploded. They were feeling very weak in their legs and they could not stop screaming as they crawled and scrambled out of the auction hall.

The atmosphere in the auction house which had just moments before been at the height of fervour was suddenly rudely interrupted by such senseless murder. The crowd were endlessly trying to escape and the auction house was soon empty. In a very short period of time, the fiery fervour was suddenly replaced by cold emptiness and the resounding laughter coming from the youth sounded unusually piercing.

Chapter 571: “A Killer Youth (3)”

“Such weaklings! Just too weak!” The youth stepped a foot on the low railing on one side of his private room said as he shook his head, looking down at the bodies lying around the steps. The scene of all those bodies with their heads all split open made for a truly grisly sight. The auctioneer who had been standing tall and straight on the stage had suddenly lost all the strength in his legs and crashed sitting onto the ground, his whole body trembling as he stared at the unusually vicious and cruel youth above.

The youth was extremely good looking, but he was no different from a devil!

He saw the crowd disperse and the place grew quiet. The attractive looking youth sneered with contempt and suddenly, his eyes fell onto the private room opposite his and his gaze caught onto Jun Wu Xie's.

Blood was still streaked on the youth's attractive face. When his eyes met those of Jun Wu Xie's, he froze a moment.

In the clear and cold eyes, he did not see a trace of fear, nor was there any panic, but just a calm and placid chill.

The lips on the attractive youth curled up slightly, and mouthed his words silently saying:

‘Stare at me more and I will kill you.’

Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow.

The attractive youth seemed to find it interesting and he leaned his body forward, seemingly as though he was about to leap over to them.

Qiao Chu and the others immediately moved to stand before Jun Wu Xie. The murderous aura the attractive youth gave out made all the companions raise their guard.

The interest in the attractive youth's eyes suddenly grew more intense, and he was just about to lunge when the other three men who had been sitting silently in their private room without saying a single word, suddenly stood up. One of the men reached his hand out and held back the attractive youth by his shoulder, which was almost trembling with eagerness.

“Gu Ying, enough.” The man said coldly.

The smile on the attractive youth's face turned into an expression of impatience and he was silent a moment before he took a step back. But his eyes did not leave Jun Wu Xie a moment and he mouthed out words silently once more to say:

‘You have beautiful eyes. I wish to dig them out.’

Qiao Chu and his companions who were standing between them could read the attractive youth's lips and their faces contorted with murderous rage.

Nevertheless, the youth was completely not interested in Qiao Chu and the others. He turned and looked at the helplessly terrified auctioneer still sitting on the stage and said: “Hey! Send the items over. Now.”

Upon finishing his sentence, he flicked his hand and threw out a bunch of banknotes. The notes scattered down from the second floor and fluttered to the ground, getting stained red by the fresh red blood pooled across the floor.

The terrified auctioneer did not dare to hesitate another moment and hurriedly instructed the servants to send the Hibernation Elixirs up to the youth.

After receiving the Hibernation Elixirs, the youth strode slowly with the other three men as they proceeded to leave the auction house. Before he stepped out, he turned and gave Jun Wu Xie another malicious gaze, his mouth twisted in an evil smile.

“Damn him! Just who was that kid!?” Qiao Chu asked furiously

after the youth had left.

If Jun Wu Xie had not secretly signalled for all of them to refrain from making any rash moves, all of the others would have charged over and destroyed that insufferable and condescending scumbag earlier.

“He’s from the Middle Realm.” Fan Zhuo said with a frown.

“What!?” Qiao Chu exclaimed in disbelief, his eyes wide.

Fan Zhuo’s eyes were narrowed, as he delved deep in thought.

“Didn’t you guys notice it earlier? When that youth was about to lunge earlier, he had emanated slight traces of purple spiritual power. I do not remember that there is anyone in the Lower Realm who was able to breakthrough to the purple spirit level in their teens.”

Fan Zhuo’s reminder suddenly made all of them realise the small detail that they all had overlooked earlier.

“People from the Middle Realm..... Why did they appear here?” Hua Yao’s brow was deeply furrowed.

“People in the Middle Realm, are all purple spirits?” Jun Wu Xie asked suddenly.

She had noticed something queer about the youth earlier and what she had felt for him was a feeling similar to what Qiao Chu and the others gave her.

Chapter 572: “A Killer Youth (4)”

But Jun Wu Xie had the slight feeling that that youth was stronger than Qiao Chu and the others and that the other three men behind the youth were not weaker than the youth.

The sudden appearance of four powerful characters had forced her to practice a little more caution and to be careful in dealing with them.

Why had these people from the Middle Realm appeared here in the tiny Chan Lin Town for no good reason?

“You can’t really call them purple spirits.” Hua Yao explained, his face in a frown: “It’s just that people from the Middle Realm possess a unique method that allows them to amplify their powers to a state where they are at a purple spirit level. But that method does not allow us to maintain in that state for long periods. As our spiritual powers increase and develop, that period allowed to us will also be extended, and gradually attain a true purple spirit.”

The reason that the Middle Realm was mightier than the Lower Realm was because once their ring spirits awoke, they would already be able to employ the powers of a purple spirit.

The fact that four men from the Middle Realm had suddenly and mysteriously appeared forced Hua Yao and the other companions to be doubly cautious. In the Cloudy Peaks the previous time, they had encountered only two of them and that had nearly cost them their lives if not for Ye Sha’s selfless sacrifice.

This time, there were four of them. Although they could not ascertain whether they were from any of the Twelve Palaces, they knew they could not afford to make a single wrong move.

He Chang Le had never in his dreams expected that the auction which had been at a new peak of fervor never seen before to suddenly end in such a way.

The auction could not continue and was stopped in the middle. He Chang Le's face was pale as he quickly got people to properly clean up the place and remove the bodies.

When Jun Wu Xie and her companions were leaving, He Chang Le had escorted them as he forcibly put up a false front of bravado, but it was not difficult to sense the despair he was in his heart that he was trying futilely to hide.

After such a bloody incident, he was not able to determine whether the auction by the Chan Lin Auction House this time was a success or a flop.

But after this auction, the youth and the other three men with him had suddenly seemed to have disappeared into thin air and they never appeared again ever since.

That night, Hua Yao disguised himself once again and made his way to the Chan Lin Auction House. He only received the sum of money for the successful auction of the elixirs and due to the interruption caused by the youth, which suddenly brought the auction to come to a sudden end in the middle. Although all the elixirs were auctioned off, a batch of spirit stones were left and they agreed to leave them there for the next auction.

When Hua Yao saw He Chang Le at the auction house, his face was still very pale. But he still did not forget to discuss about furthering their cooperation. He Chang Le fully waived off the commission for the items auctioned off this time and handed the full sum received for the elixirs to Hua Yao. He only asked for Hua Yao's continued support with his elixirs to forge a long term partnership and he promised to get Hua Yao a satisfactory price for all of them.

Hua Yao replied that he needed to go back and discuss it a little and will come back with a reply. He Chang Le did not push it further. The mess in today's auction had been a big headache for him and if he had initially intended to convince Hua Yao to

continue to supply the Chan Lin Auction House with their elixirs to boost the fame and reputation of their auction house, he suddenly found himself reduced to being more anxious to salvage their reputation instead.....

Such a horrifying murder to have occurred in the midst of an auction, and more than ten men were killed. It was a big blow to the Chan Lin Auction House and he did not know if they would survive it.

If immediate measures were not taken to try to remedy the situation, the auction house might not be able to continue.

He Chang Le had to place his hope on the man who had brought them the unprecedented crowd with his elixirs.

Hua Yao relayed He Chang Le's interest in a cooperation to Jun Wu Xie and Jun Wu Xie immediately agreed without a moment's hesitation.

He Chang Le's thoughts coincidentally matched with hers.

She needed money, and He Chang Le needed to repair and reinstate the Chan Lin Auction House's reputation. They were just working together, to satisfy their own individual needs.

Chapter 573: “Murder of a Fellow Disciple (1)”

The Zephyr Academy’s holiday went by in a flash. Jun Wu Xie and her companions were moving out to make their return trip to the academy.

The bustle in Chan Lin Town quietened down tremendously after the disciples of the Zephyr Academy all left, and the streets suddenly became bare and tranquil. But at the same time next month, all the hustle and bustle would return once again.

Qiao Chu and the others had reached the branch division first and Jun Wu Xie was just stepping into the Zephyr Academy’s main branch with Fan Zhuo.

And when Jun Wu Xie took her first step into the Zephyr Academy, she was met with many stares filled with disdain and hatred directed at her.

Quite a number of disciples had remained back at the Academy over the holidays and they were seemingly giving out different vibes as compared to those who had gone to Chan Lin Town. Upon seeing Jun Wu Xie, these people had moved on from ignoring and disregarding her previously to staring at her with utter contempt and undisguised hatred now.

The unfriendly stares were so obvious that even the always calm and cool Jun Wu Xie felt the change in their eyes.

The air in the academy changed to become a little stifling with the return of Jun Wu Xie. Jun Wu Xie walked along with Fan Zhuo and all the other disciples they passed shot them with endless glares filled with thick enmity and disdain.

What had happened?

Jun Wu Xie felt that something must have happened in the few days that she had been away, or why had the glares from all the

disciples directed at her become so filled with venom?

Fan Zhuo could feel the strange atmosphere within the academy as well. He pulled Jun Wu Xie along as he sped up, hurriedly wanting to return back to the sanctity of the little bamboo grove.

The two of them had just put their first foot into the little yard when Fan Jin, who had quickly received the news of their return, rushed over in a hurry.

“Big brother, did something happen in the academy?” Fan Zhuo’s face was looking puzzled and confused. He could not help but have noticed all those stares directed at Jun Wu Xie.

Fan Jin was actually more anxious than Fan Zhuo was as he looked at the calm Jun Wu Xie, his forehead covered in a thin sheen of perspiration.

“In the few days that you guys were not here, somebody leaked out the news that Li Zi Mu’s death was connected to you.” Fan Jin’s explanation had been extremely simple but in reality, the rumours being spread was a lot more malicious than that.

Somehow, somebody found out that halfway through the Spirit Hunt, Li Zi Mu had switched teams and transferred himself to Jun Wu Xie’s team. And after that, Li Zi Mu’s name had suddenly appeared in the namelist that recorded the names of the disciples who had lost their lives in the Spirit Hunt.

Having deaths occur during the various Spirit Hunts was actually seen to be normal and no one would really pay much attention to who had lost their lives.

But Li Zi Mu’s identity was different from others. He was the only disciple who was accepted into the Spirit Healer faculty this year and had garnered a lot of attention from the other disciples. His death was hence known to many of the disciples and some jeered while others sympathised.

In the end, just as the tragedy that happened in the Spirit Hunt

was about to become a faded memory, a startling piece of news suddenly spread throughout the academy!

Jun Wu Xie was directly linked to Li Zi Mu's death. Li Zi Mu had originally started the Spirit Hunt with another team when they entered the Battle Spirits Forest. They had encountered Jun Wu Xie and Fan Jin's team midway and it was said that Jun Wu Xie had suddenly extended an invitation to Li Zi Mu, to have Li Zi Mu join Fan Jin's team.

Li Zi Mu had found it hard to decline such generosity on Jun Wu Xie's part and had forced himself to accept it. And not long after he transferred into Jun Wu Xie's team, he had suddenly died under dubious circumstances in the Battle Spirits Forest.

The rumour, had contained largely the truth of the matter, except for one point.

And that was Jun Wu Xie had not invited Li Zi Mu, but it had been Li Zi Mu who had made the request to join her team.

But it was that very little twist, that made most of the other disciples come to such a wrongful conclusion.

Everything between Jun Wu Xie and Li Zi Mu had spread far and wide within the academy from before and all the disciples knew of the great enmity they held for each other.

Chapter 574: “Murder of a Fellow Disciple (2)”

During the Spirit Hunt, the complications that came with the believe that Jun Xie had invited Li Zi Mu to join his team made people think that Jun Xie’s intentions were not as simple as it seemed.

And not long after Li Zi Mu had joined them, he had died in the Battle Spirits Forest. And among all the members in Jun Xie’s team, only Li Zi Mu, who had joined the team halfway had died when even all the disciples from the branch division had come out unscathed. The unusual situation had made all the other disciples deeply suspicious.

Li Zi Mu must surely have been killed by Jun Xie!

Jun Xie had obviously intended to kill him right from the start!

Fan Jin looked anxiously at Jun Wu Xie. Those rumours had spread like wildfire across the plains throughout the academy and Jun Wu Xie had coincidentally not been in the academy. Fan Jin had tried his best to suppress those malicious rumours but he had failed miserably. The rumours had spread faster and more fiercely instead and everyone strongly believed that Jun Xie had killed Li Zi Mu due to jealousy and hatred.

The damage and repercussions from being rumoured to have killed a fellow disciple had huge implications just like when Lu Wei Jie had left, he had only accused Ning Xin of having plotted to kill a fellow disciple. Although she had not succeeded, but Ning Xin’s reputation had been completely torn to pieces. And now that Jun Xie had been truly branded as a murderer who had undeniably killed his fellow disciple, coupled with the fact that Li Zi Mu had indeed died, the repercussions were a whole lot worse!

If a disciple had been perceived as despicable and lacked in

morals, he would most definitely suffer certain setbacks. But if someone was discovered to harbour intentions to kill a fellow disciple, and the disciple had truly died, the gravity of the matter was on a completely different matter!

In recent days, there had been much talk going around that Jun Xie must be driven out of the Zephyr Academy and the whispers had already reached all the way up to Fan Qi's ears.

Jun Wu Xie listened in silence, and there wasn't a single trace of anxiety on her face.

"Little Xie, what should we do about this?" Fan Jin knew Jun Wu Xie would have her own ideas and he prayed that she would be able to turn things around.

Instead, Jun Wu Xie looked slowly at Fan Jin and replied in an unhurried tone: "What they are saying is right. I did kill him."

Although the rumour had been twisted and exaggerated, but in truth, it wasn't that far from what really happened.

But the truth that had been successfully covered up had been manipulated by hidden hands and it had stirred up the whole academy by adding a little spice to the story to portray her as a despicable scoundrel who had harboured hatred when she had failed in the attempt to steal the position.

Although Jun Wu Xie had indeed killed Li Zi Mu, the real reason behind it was not as shameful as what was being said in those rumours.

Fan Jin found himself unable to find any words to say to Jun Wu Xie's reply.

Yes, Li Zi Mu was killed by Jun Wu Xie, but the real reason was not because she harboured hatred for him!

"But the truth is not like what everyone's saying, don't you want to explain yourself to them? The implications are too grave this time. Although my father had been able to suppress what is being

said a little, but if this goes on.....” Fan Jin scratched his head furiously in frustration. He could not understand how Jun Wu Xie could still be so calm.

Doesn’t she care about her reputation at all?

All the disciples of the Zephyr Academy had esteemed backgrounds and were from significantly established families. If this rumour was leaked out and spread further, it would most definitely cause irrecoverable harm to her future prospects.

Fan Jin was feeling terribly anxious and worried but the victim herself in this whole episode was instead portraying absolute calm.

“If they want to blow it up further, let them. I had dared to do it, and I would naturally know how to handle it. But the time is still not ripe. I would like to see, who the hidden hands behind this rumours belong to.” Jun Wu Xie’s eyebrow raised slightly at the corner. She had never allowed herself to be affected by rumours.

After she had been reborn, while she was in the Imperial City of the Qi Kingdom, she had had her fair share of vicious rumours spread about her then.

Chapter 575: “Murder of a Fellow Disciple (3)”

But as of today, in the whole Kingdom of Qi, who would still say a single disparaging word about her?

The Young Miss that everyone once spat at for being overbearingly arrogant, was now the most revered and respected lady Confucius throughout the whole Qi Kingdom.

Retaliation, it did not matter how long it took, but to see if one could take down the enemy in one single shot.

Fan Jin opened his mouth, but could not utter a single word.

Fan Zhuo instead poured Fan Jin and Jun Wu Xie some tea while laughing and said gently with a smile on his lips: “Hasn’t my elder brother learnt to believe in Little Xie’s capabilities by now? He is not making a move now as he wants the matter to blow up further. And we will wait till the real culprit behind the scenes is revealed, before we deal the killing blow. Wouldn’t that be more satisfying?”

Fan Jin smiled bitterly, and shook his head.

“It might be more satisfying. But when the rumours are being spread so widely, more and more of them will believe it them, and those disciples will.....”

Fan Zhuo smiled gently and reassured his brother: “Don’t worry. When Little Xie makes his move, the whole situation will be completely overturned.”

Fan Jin sighed, feeling very helpless. With Jun Wu Xie and Fan Zhuo being so calm about it, his anxiety and worries were somehow placated.

“Did we receive any news from the Rui Lin Army?” Jun Wu Xie asked suddenly.

Fan Jin was surprised and took a moment before he replied.

“I heard, that they will arrive in another five days.” Fan Jin said rubbing his temples as he was not sure if Long Qi would be satisfied with the way Zephyr Academy had handled the matter.

The corners of Jun Wu Xie’s lips curled up slightly, and Fan Zhuo was surprised when he saw that slight smile on Jun Xie’s face.

No doubt that face possessed rather delicate features and it belonged to a young youth. So why had that slightest of smiles suddenly made him feel as if it was getting hard to breathe?

“Five days. That will be enough.” Jun Wu Xie lowered her eyes and looked at her own reflection in her teacup, and her eyes suddenly flashed with determination to succeed.

Fan Jin stayed a while longer before he left. And when he left, his face had still been deeply etched with worry.

Fan Zhuo stared after the departing figure of his anxious and worried brother and he could not help but smile.

“This brother of mine, has a rather innocent mentality. I believe Little Xie already has some idea who is the real culprit behind all this subterfuge.” As he spoke, he rested his head on an upturned palm, his softly handsome face smiling gently as he stared knowingly at Jun Xie’s tiny face.

Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow.

“Besides the idiot who is asking for death, who else could it be?”

To be able to stir up so many disciples within such a short period of time in the Zephyr Academy, and to be able to spread those malicious rumours so quickly, no one else was able to achieve those feats besides who she had in mind.

“She had initially picked on me before to use me against Fan Jin, but I can see now, that she has switched the target of her attacks to me instead.” Jun Wu Xie said with a cold laugh as she swirled the white jade teacup in her hand. The tea rippled within the cup and a slight fragrance emanated from the cup.

Having failed at trying to win her favour and got rudely snubbed but she had still refused to give up. Should she be commended on her bravery or was she just unbelievably dense? She had been forced into a corner and had come up with such a clumsy retaliation.

“Haha, I think she is feeling cornered or she would never do something like this. She must be waiting for you to get overwhelmed when you get surrounded by enemies on all sides with no one to go to for help before she can appear before you to extend her hand to help pull you out of the quandary?” Fan Zhuo’s smile grew wider on his face, as if amused by his own ponderings and laughed out loud.

Ning Xin’s clumsy methods would only be able to pull wool over his naive elder brother’s eyes. When employed before Jun Wu Xie, it was mere child’s play and did not qualify to be deemed as a plot at all. Giving it the slightest thought and everything became clear as day to her.

“I would really like to see, how she would come asking to be humiliated.” Jun Wu Xie replied, her eyes suddenly flashed with a chilling glint.

Chapter 576: “Murder of a Fellow Disciple (4)”

If Ning Xin did not overestimate her own abilities, that meant that Ning Xin had clearly underrated Jun Wu Xie.

Scheming against her? Ning Xin did not possess the brains for it.

“Five days later, I will make her realise what it really means to be unable to fend for yourself.” Jun Wu Xie said as she put the white jade cup down upon the table gently.

If people come to her to seek death, she saw no reason to not oblige.

In the three days since Jun Wu Xie had returned to the Zephyr Academy, the rumours about her within the academy had not ceased. Some of the disciples had even come up to the doors at the little bamboo grove and threw stones within. The stones had all been aimed in the direction towards the room where Jun Wu Xie was staying at.

A few times, when Fan Jin had come to the little bamboo grove, he had caught those disciples who were up to mischief and given them a good telling off before chasing them away.

Even several of the teachers had joined in with barely veiled criticism. From that vein, the critics had all been teachers from the Beast Spirit faculty and it had stemmed from the teacher who had seen Jun Xie only once in class, Qian Yuan He.

It was said that a disciple had gone up to Qian Yuan He and asked his opinion of Jun Xie’s character during this period.

Qian Yuan He had replied by criticising Jun Xie endlessly from head to toe without any mercy, and had even said that it was his biggest disgrace to have ever taught a disciple like that.

Qian Yuan He’s reply had made those disciples who were already

displeased with Jun Xie firmly believe the malicious rumours around to be the truth and the hatred and rage had exploded unrestrained.

And this time, when Fan Jin came to the little bamboo grove, he saw another group of disciples blocking the doors, and they were cursing and berating Jun Xie with unspeakable words and accusations, which incessantly pricked at his ears.

“Jun Xie, don’t think that by hiding here, you will be able to escape your punishment! You murdered a fellow disciple because of your pettiness! Your incorrigible actions will surely get yourself killed one day! You will not come to a good end!”

“Useless trash like you should just get out of the Zephyr Academy! Having you within its walls is the greatest disgrace!”

“You shameless wretch! Why don’t you just die.....”

Fan Jin was just nearing the bamboo grove when he heard the curses clearly, and his face darkened immediately.

“All of you shut your mouths! Who gave you the right to come here and cause such a disturbance! ? Doesn’t any of you know the academy’s rules? Anyone that trespasses into the bamboo grove would be immediately expelled! Don’t you want to remain in the academy anymore! ?” Fan Jin’s expression was immensely dark as he shouted angrily at the group of disciples.

After being yelled at by Fan Jin, the disciples quaked. Their legs had intended to escape but without exactly knowing why, they were struck with a sudden urge and those feet had taken a step forward instead and they stood up to Fan Jin in defiance.

“Senior Fan! We all respect you as you have always been impartial! So why are you still protecting Jun Xie! ? I’m sure you know about the incident the time when he had tried to steal from Li Zi Mu, but you have repeatedly shielded Jun Xie. This time, he had shown no restraint and had even laid his dirty hands on our

fellow disciple and killed Li Zi Mu! How could you still continue to protect him! ? Are you really the same Senior Fan that we had held in such great esteem all this while? That scumbag is ruthless, disgraceful and despicable in his thoughts and deeds, and it is all because you have been shielding him all this time that he had gone from bad to worse! Senior Fan, for how long are you going to be further muddled? If you persist to be unable to distinguish between right and wrong, don't blame us if we start to lose our faith in you!" The lead youth told Fan Jin, his expression indignantly righteous.

If this was before, no one would ever doubt Fan Jin's upright and righteous character. But now, after the few rounds of rumours being spread, Fan Jin's position in the hearts of the other disciples had greatly diminished and his words no longer carried as much weight as before.

This was the first time that any of the disciples had rebuked Fan Jin in his face. Fan Jin's eyes widened, and his chest heaved as sudden rage filled him, leaving him greatly vexed.

Chapter 577: “Murder of a Fellow Disciple (5)”

Fan Jin felt that his mind was in a whirl, he really felt like telling these ignorant youths that they had been wrong right from the start. Right from the beginning of all this, Jun Wu Xie had been the real victim all this time!

The fact that Li Zi Mu had gained entry into the Spirit Healer faculty was because of Jun Wu Xie, and when he had attracted Gu Li Sheng’s attention, it had been due to Jun Wu Xie as well.

If not for Jun Wu Xie, nobody in the Zephyr Academy would have paid Li Zi Mu any attention!

In reality, Li Zi Mu was the one who had usurped Jun Wu Xie’s position and he had still blatantly gone around and used Jun Wu Xie’s name to further elevate his own standing, completely shameless, without showing the slightest remorse. But the Zephyr Academy’s disciples had still chosen to believe what they heard which infuriated Fan Jin endlessly.

“Leave! Get out of here now!” Fan Jin shouted in rage, his face flushed red. At that moment, even the usually patient Fan Jin was itching to murder.

The youths sulked and stared at Fan Jin with displeasure. They had wanted to continue to argue but when they saw Fan Jin visibly trembling with rage, they were taken aback and they silently gulped before they beat a hasty retreat.

After those youths had departed, another figure appeared out from the side, stepping out from behind the tall bamboo trees. The figure’s shoulders were slumped and his face desolate.

“Elder Young Master.....” Ah Jing stuttered timidly as he looked at Fan Jin, who was trembling with rage.

“Ah Jing?” Fan Jin said, his face in a deep frown. Ever since Fan

Zhuo had driven Ah Jing away from here, he had not seen Ah Jing once.

Ah Jing was looking rather haggard and the eyes that were looking at Fan Jin were filled with grief.

“Elder Young Master..... Why do you make yourself suffer like this?”

“Ah Jing, what are you trying to say?” Fan Jin could feel a headache coming on.

Ah Jing took a deep breath and raised his head to look at Fan Jin.

“Elder Young Master, everyone can see that Jun Xie harbours evil intentions. Why are you still protecting him? He has already murdered Li Zi Mu! A despicable cad like that must be executed instead! You must not allow him to remain at the bamboo grove any longer. If he harms the Little Young Master, what are we then to do.....”

“That’s enough!” Fan Jin shouted loudly, interrupting Ah Jing before he could finish his sentence.

“Ah Jing, I will take it that you are just being loyal to Little Zhuo this time and not pursue the matter further. But if I hear anything like this from you again, I will not let you off so easily!” Fan Jin had really lost his temper this time. [What was wrong with everyone in the Zephyr Academy? Why would they pass a death sentence upon Jun Wu Xie based purely on unverified rumours?]

Among all of them, how many had actually interacted with Jun Wu Xie?

Less than a handful of them had even spoken with Jun Wu Xie personally but they had all been ready to brand her a vicious scourge and could not wait to rid themselves of him!

“Elder Young Master, please do not persist in being blinded.....” Ah Jing persisted.

Fan Jin ran out of patience to continue listening to Ah Jing's nonsense. He grabbed Ah Jing by the back of his collar and threw him out of the bamboo grove.

Ah Jing landed hard on the ground and he stared blankly as he sat there. Disciples from all directions cast curious glances at Ah Jing as they passed.

As he stared at Fan Jin's disappearing back as he walked into the bamboo grove, Ah Jing's teary voice rang out loudly all of a sudden: "Elder Young Master! The Little Young Master really reveres you as his elder brother! Why are you trying to harm him! ? Why did you bring Jun Xie, who is completely devoid of morals, to be so close to the Little Young Master! ? Elder Young Master! Is this how you are repaying the trust the Little Young Master places in you! ? And repaying the esteemed Headmaster for bringing you up till now! ?"

Ah Jing lost his mind. He sat upon the hard ground crying and wailing, and the words that came out from his mouth made all the passing disciples' eyes widen in shock.

That was Ah Jing! The trusted aide that had served Fan Zhuo closely ever since he was a little boy!

And the words that were coming out from Ah Jing's mouth today had been a shocking revelation, that had struck like a lightning bolt onto everyone within the Zephyr Academy.

Chapter 578: “Prep for Slap (1)”

The admonishment delivered in a voice filled with such anguish drove an undeniable thought into the minds of the masses that churned in an endless spiral.

Everyone knew that only Fan Zhuo was Fan Qi’s biological son, while Fan Jin, although possessing great skills and had an upright character, was after all still just adopted, and was not of the same blood!

That difference in their relations made a malicious thought begin to worm into the minds of quite a number of the other disciples.

Jun Xie name had been despised and spat upon endlessly but Fan Jin had still persisted in defending him and had even brought him to stay within the bamboo grove that had been reserved for Fan Zhuo’s recuperation. Could there be..... an unspeakable truth behind the reason for Fan Jin’s actions?

In moments, that line of thought blossomed within the minds of the disciples of the Zephyr Academy and Fan Jin’s stellar reputation took a beating like never before.

All of it, was unknown to Fan Jin. He had strode into the bamboo grove angrily but stopped in his tracks in the yard. He was worried that his furious expression might alarm Jun Wu Xie and Fan Zhuo and he stood there a long while before he decided to go in.

In the room, he found Fan Zhuo alone.

“Big Brother, you’re here.” Fan Zhuo greeted his brother jovially.

Fan Jin nodded and after making sure his emotions were composed, he asked: “Where is Little Xie?”

“Out.” Fan Zhuo was carrying Lord Meh Meh in his arms and was smiling contentedly as he replied, his fingers running gently over Lord Meh Meh’s soft little belly.

Lord Meh Meh sighed softly, as if reluctantly accepting Fan Zhuo's caress.

Fan Jin paused a moment.

“Out? When did she go out?” At a time like this, if she were to meet the disciples of the Zephyr Academy, things might turn out badly.

“From quite a while ago. Big Brother, don't worry. Sit down and have some tea to rest first.” Fan Zhuo said, pushing a cup of tea before Fan Jin.

Fan Jin gritted his teeth. Since he did not know where Jun Wu Xie had gone to, he could only sit down to wait.

As Fan Jin was still feeling endlessly antsy at the bamboo grove, Jun Wu Xie was already grandly seated in Gu Li Sheng's office.

Jun Wu Xie carried the little black cat in her arms, her expression calm and composed as she looked at the smiling Gu Li Sheng.

“Jun Xie, what would be the reason for your visit today?” Gu Li Sheng was smiling widely as he looked at Jun Xie. Ever since Jun Wu Xie had shown her full grasp of the concepts involved in Spirit Healing, Gu Li Sheng found that he could never portray his dignified air of a teacher before the petite sized youth anymore.

Jun Wu Xie replied in an unhurried tone: “The improvements needed for the Spirit Healing Technique have been completed.”

Gu Li Sheng's eyes widened, staring in pure disbelief at Jun Xie.

[How long has it only been? And Jun Xie had already gotten it all done.....]

Gu Li Sheng had thought that the process would have needed a long time and had never expected that Jun Xie would be able to complete it so quickly. In such a short time, and Jun Xie had finished it! ?

[Was this little lad even human?]

“Completed? Really?” Gu Li Sheng gulped loudly.

Jun Wu Xie nodded slightly.

Gu Li Sheng was so excited that his hand on the table started shaking.

“I’m now ready to return to the Spirit Healing Faculty.” Jun Wu Xie added.

“Yes! Immediately! Whenever you want to!” Gu Li Sheng agreed without a moment’s hesitation. When he had initially released Jun Xie from the Spirit Healer faculty, it was because he had been worried that people with ulterior motives would impede the little lad, and make attempts to disrupt the progress on the further development of the Spirit Healing Technique. But now that the Spirit Healer Technique is fully accomplished, Gu Li Sheng no longer had any misgivings.

He would have loved nothing more than to pin the Spirit Healer faculty’s badge on Jun Xie right at that moment. Immediately. In that instant.

“Not like this.” Jun Wu Xie raised her head slowly.

This time was nearing. Time to commence on her retaliation.

“What do you mean?” Gu Li Sheng suppressed the absolute joy in his heart and asked, not understanding what Jun Xie meant.

Chapter 579: “Prep for Slap (2)”

Jun Wu Xie replied: “After I left the Spirit Healer faculty, I was made to suffer countless curses and was widely discriminated against as I was misunderstood. So, if I am to return, I must be fully cleared of all that to have me come back properly and legitimately.”

Gu Li Sheng paused, and the smile on his face faded. An expression of guilt and shame came over his face.

He was aware of what Jun Xie had been put through in the Zephyr Academy all this time. He had thought of asking Jun Xie to come back earlier, but as long as the Spirit Healing Technique was not completed, exposing Jun Xie’s identity prematurely would only bring her more unnecessary trouble.

After all, the Spirit Healing Technique itself was greatly revered in the minds of the disciples and held in the highest of esteem. If he had suddenly announced that Jun Xie would be able to improve and further develop the Spirit Healing Technique, no matter whether he said it himself or not, it would not be so easily believed. It might not have reduced the curses and suspicions thrown at Jun Xie but even attract the unwanted attention of people who held interest in possessing the technique. These people would flock to Jun Xie in an endless line, attempting to win him over.

Worse, if anyone who held malicious intentions got to her, the results would be something he did not even want to think about.

The lure of the Spirit Healing Technique was really too great to the people and they could not afford to be careless.

With all the misgivings, and the fact that Jun Xie had not shown any signs that he intended to return to the Spirit Healer faculty, Gu Li Sheng had not taken any action.

But swirling within the academy, the accusations and criticisms against Jun Wu Xie greatly pricked at him.

“Rest assured.” Gu Li Sheng drew in a deep breath and stood up. “I will make sure you return back to the Spirit Healer faculty in grandeur. I will make sure that all the slander and defamations made against you will be completely erased. Just leave it to me. I will make sure that you will be satisfied.”

Jun Wu Xie nodded to agree. Gu Li Sheng’s words was exactly what she wanted to hear.

When Jun Wu Xie retaliates, she wasn’t just seeking to salvage and rectify her name and reputation.

What she sought, was to give the meddling fools big slaps, right before the eyes of all the disciples of the Zephyr Academy!

That would be more satisfying!

“Tomorrow. I will arranged it all tomorrow. Just rest assured and wait for it.” Gu Li Sheng promised sternly.

Jun Wu Xie lowered her head in thought.

[Tomorrow?]

According to what Fan Jin said, the Rui Lin Army would arrive at the Zephyr Academy the day after. Tomorrow would be a good time, for her to string up all her plans.

A good show calls for consecutive stages for it to be varied and brilliantly presented, didn’t it?

“Alright.” Jun Wu Xie nodded again. Before she got up to leave, she put a scroll that she had prepared beforehand on Gu Li Sheng’s table and left without turning her head back a single time.

Gu Li Sheng picked up the scroll and with just one look, his eyes widened and he suddenly could not breathe.

Every single beautiful and gracefully written character burned into his mind and his heartbeat quickened.

It was a method that would transform the Spirit Healing Technique and it was written in such a way that allowed him to fully comprehend its profound philosophy immediately!

“Jun Xie, you surprise me endlessly. Damn..... This little lad, is just..... absolutely amazing!” He perused the entire scroll in one sitting and Gu Li Sheng found himself sweating profusely. He laid back in his chair and tilted his head back, his mouth curled up in a wide smile filled with joy and gratitude.

[He has stumbled across a priceless one!]

After Jun Wu Xie left Gu Li Sheng’s office, she walked straight out of the Spirit Healer faculty building. The few Spirit Healer faculty disciples saw Jun Xie appear and their eyes shot daggers at him, wishing so much that their stares would bore a few holes through his body.

Li Zi Mu had not been popular in the Spirit Healer faculty and it was due to Gu Li Sheng’s obvious and blatant favouritism shown to him which had earned Li Zi Mu the jealousy and hatred from the other disciples in the Spirit Healer faculty. But that hatred and jealousy was still not enough to cause them to be completely unmoved by Li Zi Mu’s death when faced with an external enemy who dared to cut down one of their own, and they would never easily forgiven.

Chapter 580: “Prep for Slap (3)”

Jun Wu Xie’s expression was cold as she walked out from under the many gazes so filled with hatred and had not expected to bump in a “old familiar face” just as her front foot just stepped out of the Spirit Healer faculty.

“Little Xie! What a coincidence! I didn’t think I’ll see you here.” Ning Xin had been patiently waiting before the gates into the Spirit Healer faculty for a long while. When she spotted Jun Xie, she put on her best smile and approached the lad. The smile was as sweet as the spring breeze and so gentle that no one would ever feel threatened by such a amicable display of friendship. Compared to the cold stares filled with hidden daggers behind them that she had been getting from everyone else these days, Ning Xin’s demeanor inadvertently stood out, one of its own kind.

Jun Wu Xie’s steps stopped as she looked at Ning Xin, whose smile almost reached her ears.

Ning Xin’s face might be locked in a wide friendly smile, but her heart was chill, filled with disdain.

The moment that Jun Xie had stepped into the Spirit Healer faculty, Yin Yan had immediately run to Ning Xin to bring her the news, and Ning Xin had immediately hurried over and waited beside the gates.

After having been in the Zephyr Academy for so long, with the exception of the first day after he was admitted, Jun Xie had never shown his face at the Spirit Healer faculty anymore. But when she found out that Jun Xie had suddenly gone to the Spirit Healer faculty today, it had made Ning Xin secretly gladdened.

[The crime of murdering a fellow disciple was in no way petty and the Headmaster had been pressured from many sides to drive Jun Xie out of the Zephyr Academy. The little lad who had pretended to be calm about it all this while must be starting to

panic.]

Having stirred up such a huge uproar, even the Fan Brothers would not be able to shield Jun Xie completely.

When she became aware that Jun Xie had gone to the Spirit Healer faculty bright and early in the morning, Ning Xin was mightily pleased.

Seeing the cold expression on Jun Xie's face, Ning Xin was nevertheless unaffected and continued to say smiling: "Little Xie, I've heard about all that is being said in the academy..... The matter..... has grown to become a little too big. I saw Big Brother Fan Jin going to Uncle Headmaster's office several times to plead for you, but....."

Ning Xin put on an expression of helplessness and sighed heavily.

"I don't think coming to Uncle Gu will help. Uncle Gu does not bother himself with such matters. To make matters worse, Li Zu Mu was a favoured disciple of Uncle Gu's, and Li Zi Mu's sudden death had greatly angered Uncle Gu. Uncle Gu has gotten people to investigate the matter thoroughly and it has caused these rumours to surface. And I think Uncle Gu must still be very angry about it."

Although Ning Xin only knew that Jun Xie had gone to see Gu Li Sheng, but she thought that was all she needed to know.

She knew that Gu Li Sheng had a gentle personality but was always fiercely protective of the disciples of the Spirit Healer faculty. Yin Yan had previously often told her of how much Gu Li Sheng had always shown Li Zi Mu extraordinary care and concern. And now that Li Zi Mu had died, and the matter was inexorably linked to Jun Xie, so it would be inconceivable that Gu Li Sheng would still be civil and extend his courtesy to Jun Xie, that would be unbelievable.

Confident that Jun Xie would not have received a single kind word from his meeting with Gu Li Sheng, Ning Xin's heart was

suddenly feeling a lot lighter.

However, the expression on Jun Wu Xie's face remained stone cold, and her eyes expressionless with calm, as she looked at the pretentious Ning Xin.

Lying upon Jun Wu Xie's shoulders, the little black cat snorted in contempt.

[Is this little girl going by the name of Ning Xin, a complete idiot? She's so hopelessly dumb that she doesn't know how horrible a fate she will soon meet the day after.]

[Still prattling on the nonsense between Gu Li Sheng and his especially favoured disciple, Li Zi Mu, and the non existent investigation he ordered because of his rage.]

[All pure nonsense!]

[It had been with its Mistress all this while and it had witnessed every single thing.]

[Gu Li Sheng had not shown a single sliver of grief or sadness. From the beginning to the end, he had not even mentioned Li Zi Mu's name a single time!]

[All these upheaval, must have been the work of this dumb little girl!]

[With that complete lack of a brain, she is pitting herself against its Mistress?]

[What a "meownificant" joke!]

"Meow~"

[Mistress, let's not waste our breath on such dumb dumbs, or her low intelligence might become contagious.]

Chapter 581: “Prep for Slap (4)”

The little black cat grumbled endlessly impatiently.

Jun Wu Xie raised up a hand and patted the little black cat on its rear before raising her eyes to look at Ning Xin whose expression was looking deeply concerned.

“What’s true and what’s false, we will know for sure tomorrow. You don’t have to concern yourself with it.” After saying those words, Jun Wu Xie immediately resumed her steps to leave.

Just as the black cat had said, if she continued the conversation with Ning Xin any further, it would only be a further affront to her intelligence!

Ning Xin stared flabbergasted at the departing figure of Jun Xie, never expecting that Jun Xie would still be so cold and aloof under the current circumstances! She was suddenly left feeling highly humiliated and badly snubbed!

“Jun Xie! You dare snub me so! ? You just wait! One fine day, I will have you come crawling, pleading for me to save you!” Ning Xin gritted her teeth as she stared furiously at the back of the disappearing Jun Wu Xie, wishing fervently that she was able to shred that back to pieces.

“Yin Yan!” Ning Xin gave out a loud shout.

Yin Yan who had been hidden in the shadows appeared immediately.

“Senior Ning.”

“Relay my orders to all of them! I want the matter about Jun Xie murdering Li Zi Mu to be fully blown up! Within three days, I want to hear of the notice from Fan Qi that Jun Xie has been expelled!”

Yin Yan shivered, and asked hesitatingly: “Senior Ning, wouldn’t that be a little too much..... Those highly skilled purple spirits.....”

Ning Xin replied with a cold laugh and said: “What are you afraid of? I am not responsible for all these. Didn’t I say it earlier? All this started because Gu Li Sheng ordered for an investigation into the matter. I do not believe that anyone in this world would go against Gu Li Sheng, the founder of Spirit Healing, to protect a little brat.”

Yin Yan gulped. He was shocked that Ning Xin had even included Gu Li Sheng’s name into her plot.

That might be a little too reckless for his taste.

.....

By the time Jun Wu Xie got back to the bamboo grove, Fan Jin was acting like he had hot coals in his pants. He could not sit still and paced endlessly within the little yard.

When he spotted Jun Wu Xie, he shot like an arrow over to her and proceeded to look at Jun Wu Xie from head to toe. And only after he was sure that she was not hurt in any way that he let out a big sigh of relief.

“Where did you go?” Fan Jin asked worriedly.

“To see Gu Li Sheng.” Jun Wu Xie glanced at Fan Jin and saw how anxious he was, knowing that he was just concerned about her safety.

Fan Jin’s personality wasn’t too bad, just that he was a little..... too obvious.

If he had possessed just half of Fan Zhuo’s intelligence, Jun Wu Xie would not feel so burdened when communicating with him.

Never ever put a person who was socially impaired together with another person with a one tracked mind to devise any schemes. They would both collapse from the effort before they come up with anything.

“Uncle Gu?” As expected, Fan Jin had not caught on to Jun Wu Xie’s line of thought and was still befuddled.

Standing before the bamboo dwelling, Fan Zhuo looked on helplessly at his not exactly bright brother, and could do nothing but only shake his head in resignation.

“When are you making your move?” Fan Zhuo asked without needing Jun Xie to explain, and knew the purpose of his visit to Gu Li Sheng.

“Tomorrow.” Just as she thought. It was so much easier to talk to more intelligent people.

“That fast?” Fan Zhuo asked, his eyebrow raised.

“The Rui Lin Army will be arriving the day after tomorrow.” At the mention of the Rui Lin Army, Jun Wu Xie’s chilly eyes softened a little and she lowered her eyes. The air and demeanor about her seemed to feel less unapproachable as well.

“Rui Lin Army? What is happening here? I had heard you and my brother mention them before, but what does the actions you are going to take have got to do with the Rui Lin Army?” Having noticed the obvious change that had come over Jun Wu Xie, Fan Zhuo was feeling rather intrigued.

Just what powers did the Rui Lin Army possess, that the mere mention of them had been able to change the air around Jun Xie and his demeanor in a moment.

Hearing the name of the Rui Lin Army, Fan Jin’s expression froze.

During the period of the Spirit Hunt, Fan Zhuo had remained within the little bamboo grove and did not know a thing about what had happened in the Battle Spirits Forest.

Chapter 582: “Slight Longing”

When they returned, Fan Jin had not wanted all those dirty dealings to pollute his little brother’s ears and had not mentioned a word about it.

In regards to Jun Wu Xie’s true identity, besides Qiao Chu and his gang, Fan Jin was the only other person who knew, throughout the whole Zephyr Academy.

The Young Miss of the most ferocious strike force! The daughter of the Lin Palace’s Jun Family!

About the incident that Ning Xin had attempted to get the men from the Rui Lin Army killed in the Battle Spirits Forest, Fan Zhuo did not have the slightest clue.

“It’s linked.” Jun Wu Xie said as she nodded slightly.

Fan Zhuo firmly believed, that the three words “Rui Lin Army”, held extraordinary meaning for Jun Xie.

“Rui Lin Army..... I have heard of them before. Is it an army from the Qi Kingdom?” Fan Zhuo was suddenly very curious about the Rui Lin Army.

“Yes..... Yes.....” Fan Jin replied in a stutter, looking nervously at Fan Zhuo. He did not really want Fan Zhuo to become involved in such matters. He wanted Fan Zhuo to be able to recuperate in peace and get well. He should not hear about all these insidious ploys and crafty schemes and he did not need to know about them.

It was only recently that Fan Zhuo’s health had shown some improvements and Fan Jin did not want anything untoward to happen.

Being the intelligent people that they were, when Jun Wu Xie and Fan Zhuo saw Fan Jin’s uncomfortable expression, the two of them immediately ceased, and did not mention another word about the Rui Lin Army.

It was only after Fan Jin left, that the gentleness in Fan Zhuo's smile disappeared, and was quickly replaced by an inquisitive one.

“Shouldn't you be telling me what actually happened in the Battle Spirits Forest already? The Rui Lin Army must have some links to you right?” Fan Zhuo asked Jun Xie, his curiosity piqued.

Jun Wu Xie gazed at Fan Zhuo, and she started to frown.

There wasn't too much to tell, but it wasn't that little either, as the explanation would implicate many other things. If she was to explain it.....

Jun Wu Xie felt that it might require quite a bit of effort.

“Another day. Go ask Qiao Chu about it.” Jun Wu Xie nonchalantly threw the burden of giving such a long string of explanations to Qiao Chu. That trait of Jun Wu Xie, made Fan Zhuo feel like crying at that moment.

“You must really..... loathe to speak a lot.” After having spent such a long time with Jun Xie, Fan Zhuo had already gotten a good grasp of Jun Xie's personality. Instead of saying that he is cold and arrogant, it was more like he lacked the skills in socialising with others.

In their daily chats and usual interactions, Jun Xie would mostly give a reply. But when it called for lengthy rant to explain, she would either zip up and remain silent, or throw the task to someone else.

Jun Wu Xie wrinkled her nose and got up to leave.

She did not know why, but an image of an demonically wild, but perfectly handsome face suddenly appeared in her mind.

That one person who would always appear unpredictably and disappear just as suddenly, who had always somehow forced her to open her mouth to speak, had not been seen for quite a long while.

In the beginning, Jun Wu Xie spoke even less than she did now,

but that person had incorrigibly and adamantly continued to harass her, making her slowly learn to become aware of emotions like displeasure, and to give vent to them. That was how she gradually began to speak a little more, bit by bit.

After the last parting in the Phoenix Academy, she had not seen him for rather long.

So many things had happened in the Zephyr Academy and she had not thought of that person much.

But suddenly out of the blue, an image of that person's face had surfaced in her mind.

A sudden urge gripped at her heart which made her say:

“Ye Sha.”

A shadow streaked in through the window, falling into a kneeling position neatly before Jun Wu Xie.

“Your subordinate awaits the Missy's orders.”

Jun Wu Xie did not raise her head, but her eyes remained staring at her own palm. With a flick of her fingers, silver needles suddenly appeared in her hands.

Back at the Lin Palace, she had used these very needles to stab into that person's death acupoint. That time, the person's warm blood had flowed down the length of the needles and collected in her palm. That had been so long ago..... She could not explain it, but suddenly, it seemed as though she could still feel the same warmth on the silver needles that she had felt then.

Chapter 583: “Mobbed with Slaps”

Chapter 583: Mobbed by Slaps (1)

“My elder brother..... where is he at the moment?” Jun Wu Xie asked in a voice so soft as to be almost inaudible.

“Your humble subordinate does not know.” Ye Sha replied, his voice low and solemn.

Jun Wu Xie bit on her lip and said: “You’re dismissed.”

Ye Sha stood up, and when he reached the doors, his steps stopped.

“Although your subordinate does not know where Master Wu Yao is, but if your subordinate is correct, he might not be in the Lower Realm at the moment. Things that can heal one’s soul, can only be found in the Middle Realm.”

Jun Wu Xie raised her head suddenly.

“My brother is from the Middle Realm?”

She had always felt that Jun Wu Yao was exceptionally mysterious. His powers were so strong as to be able to defy the Heavens. Jun Wu Yao’s might could easily dominate over anyone Jun Wu Xie had ever seen. Ye Sha had shown that his powers were about on par with those people from the Twelve Palaces in the Cloudy Peaks, and as Ye Sha’s Lord, Jun Wu Yao’s powers, would naturally not be inferior to Ye Sha’s.

Although Jun Wu Xie had had her own guesses about it all this while, it was only at this moment that she confirmed her suspicions.

Ye Sha did not say a word, and just silently left the room.

Jun Wu Xie lay down on her bed, and Lord Meh Meh trotted over and jumped up. It used its rotund body to squeeze the little black cat away from Jun Wu Xie’s side, and snuggled up closer to find

itself a comfortable position, sticking itself close to Jun Wu Xie as it laid itself down.

“Not in the Lower Realm?” Jun Wu Xie asked herself as she laid the back of her hand on her cool forehead. Even she did not know what was wrong with herself today.

Why did she suddenly think of Jun Wu Yao?

The emotions that filled her heart were strange and unfamiliar to her and it made her feel rather helpless and lost. There was a slight twinge that tugged at her heart and she could not explain or pinpoint the problem properly.

As she laid upon the soft bedding, Jun Wu Xie’s eyes slowly closed as she slowly drifted off into a dreamless sleep.

It was brought and early the next morning when all the disciples of the Zephyr Academy were gathered. They were supposed to have gone for training but they were suddenly notified to immediately gather at the Zephyr Academy’s assembly square.

The square was packed with youths, as the disciples followed their respective teachers’ lead, to stand in neat rows as they filed in.

The Zephyr Academy seldom gathered all the disciples so formally and the square was filled with chatter and debate. Everyone was trying to guess the reason behind the sudden decision for all the disciples and teachers congregate so suddenly.

“This must have something to do with Jun Xie.” One of the youths among the crowd whispered loudly, attracting the attention of many other disciples.

“How can that be? You think she is capable of causing every single one of us to be mobilised like this in such a grand fashion?”

“That just shows how ignorant you are. One of my dorm mates is a disciple of the Spirit Healer faculty. He told me Jun Xie had suddenly appeared at the Spirit Healer faculty yesterday. Didn’t

you hear about that?” Another youth exclaimed proudly.

All the disciples around them suddenly held strange expressions on their faces, their eyes flashing brightly at the piece of juicy gossip they just heard.

“Really? What happened then? Tell us quick!”

Suddenly finding all eyes were focused on him, the youth was feeling extremely flattered and he loved the feeling as he basked proudly under all the undiverted attention showered upon him. He then asked all of the others with his chest puffed up: “Just a few days ago, did you all hear the rumours about Jun Xie having murdered Li Zi Mu? Do you still remember that?”

All the youths around him nodded vehemently. It had caused such a big stir, how could any of them forget that?

“Li Zi Mu was a disciple of the Spirit Healer faculty and he was even personally selected by Gu Li Sheng when he had broken the norm and accepted only one lone disciple this year. Li Zi Mu had been extremely favored in the Spirit Healer faculty as Gu Li Sheng had showered him with utmost care and concern and had even personally instructed him in the art. But this very well favored disciple had very suddenly and mysteriously died in the Battle Spirit Forest. Do you think Gu Li Sheng would be pleased at all? Hence, he had ordered a thorough investigation into the incident a few days ago and it was found out that Jun Xie was linked to Li Zi Mu’s death.” The youth exclaimed loudly, his spit spraying over his audience listening in rapt attention.

When the other disciples heard the new developments, some of the youths who had been pretending to be uninterested before started to join the group.

Chapter 584: “Mobbed with Slaps (2)”

When the other disciples heard the new developments, some of the youths who had been pretending to be uninterested before started to join the group.

Just recently, two major incidents had occurred in the Zephyr Academy. The first was when Lu Wei Jie had been expelled from the academy together with a large bunch of other disciples and his unrestrained criticism directed at Ning Xin before he left. The other incident was when the largely well believed rumours that were still going around that Jun Xie had killed Li Zi Mu.

With these two incidents happening one after the other with such quick succession, it had greatly stirred up the disciples in the academy. As all the wild accusations and vicious rumours were all saying that the culprits had committed the merciless murder of a fellow disciple in both instances, they had attracted the attention of everyone.

“Gu Li Sheng’s prominence in the academy makes him practically untouchable and not even the Headmaster can stop him from doing what he wants to do. And when Gu Li Sheng’s beloved disciple gets mysteriously killed, do you think he would spare the culprits that easily? Jun Xie’s visit to the Spirit Healer faculty yesterday was to plead for leniency from Gu Li Sheng but when he left, it was said that her face was pale and ashen. Without a doubt, Jun Xie must have been rejected. Think about it. Jun Xie had gone to the Spirit Healer faculty yesterday, and today we have all been gathered here suddenly. What else could this be about? My guess is that that dumb fool must have angered Gu Li Sheng so much that Gu Li Sheng wants to settle the scores today and avenge the death of his beloved disciple!”

“After hearing all that you said, it sounds really plausible. I had heard that Gu Li Sheng was the one who had asked for everyone to gather here today. And based on everything you have told us, it

seems everything really fits together.” Another disciple added.

The group of youths suddenly broke out into a chorus of evil chuckles.

No one would want to study in the same academy with someone who might stab so in the back anytime without warning.

“Hey! Look over there! Who is that over there?” A sharp eyed youth suddenly hollered, having spotted two figures approaching the square from a distance.

One of them was someone everybody knew and recognised. It was Fan Jin. While the other figure who was standing beside Fan Jin was a small petite sized youth, with delicate features on his face.

“What! ? He still dares to show his face! ? Is he really not afraid of death?”

“Do you even think he would be able to hide from all of that? If Gu Li Sheng wants to revenge for Li Zi Mu, Jun Xie would not be able to escape even if he leaves the Zephyr Academy!”

The square was filled with those who sneered and were anxious to add fuel to the fire, and it also had no lack of people who just wanted to lie low and enjoy the show.

As Jun Wu Xie neared the square with her every single step, all the eyes in the square were turned, fixed onto her.

Ning Xin and Yin Yan stood within the crowd of disciples, their faces twisted in gleeful and evil smiles.

“Looks like we do not need to do anything else to get rid of him since he has already sealed his own doom when he went to seek out Gu Li Sheng. There is no way Gu Li Sheng would spare that brat easily.” Ning Xin whispered, her eyes filled with venom, but her mouth was still turned up, maintaining a gentle smile.

“Today’s notice to gather all of us here was really issued by my

Master?” Yin Yan asked.

Ning Xin nodded.

“Who else could it be but him?”

“Does that mean my Master will be making his move against Jun Xie today?”

“Naturally. Who does Jun Xie think he is? He thinks he can convince Gu Li Sheng to let him off for Li Zi Mu’s death just by making a trip to the Spirit Healer faculty to plead? How naive.” Ning Xin sang out happily.

Yin Yan brought his voice down to a low whisper and said: “Senior Ning, if Gu Li Sheng is to move against Jun Xie today..... Does not that differ from what we have planned?”

Ning Xin had intended for Jun Xie to finally admit defeat and come crawling to her where she would have a great opportunity to recruit and take Jun Xie under her wings. But if Jun Xie were to be killed here today..... She would find all her plans suddenly crumbling to dust.

Ning Xin was unconcerned as she snorted derisively and crossed her arms under her ample bosom to say: “Gu Li Sheng might be very protective of his disciples, but he is not one that likes to have blood on his hands. That fact that he had expended so much effort to get everyone gathered must be for the purpose of his revenge for Li Zi Mu, but that does not mean Jun Xie will be killed. If he really wanted Jun Xie dead, he could easily have done it using more covert methods. The most he would do to Jun Xie would be to give him a strong and stern reprimand, before throwing him out of the Zephyr Academy. But.....”

Chapter 585: “Mobbed with Slaps (3)”

Ning Xin continued with a laugh: “Getting yourself driven out of the Zephyr Academy by Gu Li Sheng will be worse than if you are expelled by the Headmaster himself. The Spirit Healing Technique that Gu Li Sheng possesses has many powers obsessed with it. Once people know that Jun Xie has incurred the wrath of Gu Li Sheng, they will not risk angering Gu Li Sheng and will make life difficult for Jun Xie. Shouldering the burden of being disliked by Gu Li Sheng, Jun Xie’s life after leaving the Zephyr Academy would be burdened with severely limited opportunities no matter where she went. If I don’t push him that far, how will he stop putting up that cold and arrogant front?”

She wasn’t being vicious, but it was Jun Xie who did not know what was good for himself and snubbed the olive branch that she extended to him. Hence, he must suffer the consequences!

Yin Yan remained silent when he saw that Jun Xie had already reached the square, and he shrank back and melded himself to hide within the crowd.

No matter how confident Ning Xin was being, Yin Yan had somehow already developed an innate fear of Jun Xie.

He would never be able to forget the scene he had witnessed in the Battle Spirits Forest.

With the appearance of Jun Xie, a heated chatter erupted as all eyes fixed upon the tiny figure. The piercing gazes could almost be felt by even Fan Jin, who was walking beside Jun Wu Xie, like daggers upon his back, making every step he took a laborious task.

But Jun Wu Xie on the other hand seemed completely unaffected, her face a placid calm, her steps unhurried, as she walked forward under overwhelming number of dagger stares. She seemed to be cut off from the world and was only walking with Fan Jin beside her, alone.

Jun Xie's calm caused all those who were waiting to see him panic stricken feeling endlessly disappointed.

Prickly curses and admonishments were thrown at Jun Xie in an endless stream but Jun Xie did not grace any of them with a response, or even give the slightest reaction to the incessant provocations, his eyes remaining focused forward.

While the clamour of the crowd continued, the Headmaster of the Zephyr Academy Fan Qi suddenly appeared at the front of the square. He cut a tall and striking figure, standing before all the disciples of the academy, his attractive face in a benign smile.

"Having all of you gathered here today, was not my idea, but it is Gu Li Sheng of the Spirit Healer faculty that asked for it. Today, he has some words that he would like to share with all of you here." Fan Qi explained with a smile on his face and stepped back to relinquish the space at the front of the crowd.

Only the Heavens knew, with the multiple incidents that had plagued the Zephyr Academy in succession, he had been a little lost on how he was to handle it. And now that Gu Li Sheng had volunteered to step forward, Fan Qi was only too glad to hand the issue over to him and spare himself the hassle.

Gu Li Sheng ambled slowly under all the expectant stares to come stand before the amassed crowd of disciples. He was dressed in a brocade robe of royal blue with a beautiful piece of jade hanging at his hip, looking every inch a gentleman, suave and graceful. But the air around him made people hesitate to approach him, and to maintain a certain distance away from him.

Gu Li Sheng's appearance caused the crowd to break into another loud clamour after having quietened down with Fan Qi's announcement.

Although many of them had guessed earlier that Gu Li Sheng had wanted to seek revenge for Li Zi Mu's death and that was the reason he had spared no effort to mobilised everyone in the whole

academy. But before seeing Gu Li Sheng appear in person, many others had still been secretly doubtful.

But now, Gu Li Sheng was standing before all of them in the flesh, and that had strongly reaffirmed all those guesses!

Many of the disciples subconsciously turned their eyes to look at Jun Xie, and the thoughts that they were thinking in their minds were obvious without needing anyone to say it out loud.

However, Jun Xie once again greatly disappointed the disciples of the Zephyr Academy with his reaction. His eyes were still cold and he did not even bother to cast a single glance at any of them and that tiny face which couldn't exactly be thought as too handsome held a chilly expression but showed no other emotion.

Gu Li Sheng was standing right in front of all the disciples gathered before him as he swept his eyes over all of them before he finally said in a solemn voice: "Quiet."

Immediately, the whispers and mutterings stopped completely.

No one dared defy the creator of the Spirit Healing Technique and cause him any displeasure. That would be a fate worse than being thrown out of the Zephyr Academy.

Chapter 586: “Mobbed with Slaps (4)”

Once satisfied that all the disciples had quietened down, Gu Li Sheng's eyes turned deep. He paused another moment in silence and his clear voice rang out: “All this while, the Spirit Healer faculty always had the least number of disciples. This, I believe, is a fact known to all of you. And all of you think being accepted into the Spirit Healer faculty is an exceptional honour where you will learn the Spirit Healing Technique and you will live a life of luxury without worry after that. Is that right?”

At Gu Li Sheng's question, all the disciples started nodding their head in agreement.

Gu Li Sheng asked again: “Do all of you feel, being able to become a disciple under Gu Li Sheng is a matter that gives you unparalleled honour?”

The disciples of the Zephyr Academy did not dare to make a sound and they all could only nod once again.

“Do all of you think that I, Gu Li Sheng, as the founder of the Spirit Healing Technique, would know the Spirit Healing Technique better than anyone else under the Heavens?” Gu Li Sheng asked of the crowd.

That was without a doubt! And all of them nodded one more time.

Gu Li Sheng cast a satisfied gaze over the sea of Zephyr Academy's disciples before him, who were nodding like chicks pecking at grains as they nodded their heads. He then smiled slightly and said: “Very good.”

The audience were baffled by what Gu Li Sheng's line of questions were driving at but they could do nothing but wait patiently.

“So now, if I am to tell all of you that there exists a person under

the Heavens, a person whose knowledge on the Spirit Healing Technique exceeds mine, a person that I, Gu Li Sheng, am unable to teach or instruct, would you believe me?”

Immediately, the nods turned into shakes of their heads.

Gu Li Sheng's smile widened.

“Do all of you know why you were not accepted into the Spirit Healer faculty?”

They youths in the crowd shook their heads uniformly.

“It's because all of you do not even understand what the Spirit Healing Technique is, and you all do not even have it in you to even understand it. To be completely honest, even for the current disciples I have in the Spirit Healing faculty now, strictly speaking, none of them qualifies. If my own standards were used to gauge, my Spirit Healing faculty would not have accepted a single disciple that failed to meet my criteria!” Gu Li Sheng's words took a sudden turn, and his tone suddenly became stern!

“The reason that I accepted them, was not because that they were superior to any of you. It was because, as a teacher of the Zephyr Academy, I needed to accept disciples, or I will not be able to answer to the Headmaster.” Gu Li Sheng said, not mincing his words.

As Gu Li Sheng spoke, Fan Qi, who had retreated to the back, suddenly had his face turn pale, but not in anger or rage, but from embarrassment.

All of Gu Li Sheng's words greatly surprised the disciples gathered before him, and the disciples of the Spirit Healer faculty among them were suddenly trembling from the rude shock that struck upon them when they heard those words.

All this while, they had thought that they were superior to all the other disciples and that was why they had been accepted into the Spirit Healer faculty. That was why they were given the

opportunity to learn the Spirit Healing Technique under Gu Li Sheng's tutelage. However, Gu Li Sheng's words today, had felt like a big hot slap across their faces, in front of everyone else in the academy, shattering and breaking into a crumble, the self perceived sense of elitism that they had been so proud of all this time!

Gu Li Sheng however, was not going to hold back, and he continued to say: "I had been resigned, that I would never ever find a person suited to learn the Spirit Healing Technique. Till one fine day! I met a youth. His appearance made me realise what the word prodigy meant..... No, to put it more accurately, he could no longer be termed as just a prodigy, but more like a freak! His understanding of the Spirit Healer Technique had even quickly surpassed mine!"

Once Gu Li Sheng's words fell into the ears of the crowd, the silence in the square was suddenly broken.

To be able to surpass Gu Li Sheng in the Spirit Healing Technique. That was just utterly unbelievable. Gu Li Sheng had always had a gentle temperament, but he was unbendingly strict when it came to the Spirit Healing Technique. From what he had said about the standards he held in his selection of disciples, it could be seen that he would not compromise when it came to his area of expertise.

Chapter 587: “Mobbed with Slaps (5)”

For someone to have gained recognition from Gu Li Sheng, that person must most definitely be someone who possessed real knowledge on the matter!

Before this, the favouritism that Gu Li Sheng had shown Li Zi Mu was obvious to everyone to see. Almost everyone there was guessing that the only disciple that he said he recognized was none other than Li Zi Mu!

Otherwise, why would Gu Li Sheng accept only one lone disciple this year, who was the late Li Zi Mu? Gu Li Sheng had shown him the utmost care and concern and had treated him exceptionally well over the other disciples in the Spirit Healer faculty.

All the disciples thought that Gu Li Sheng’s rage today was all due to Li Zi Mu’s death.

The only disciple that Gu Li Sheng personally acknowledged had died under mysterious circumstances, Gu Li Sheng must be greatly infuriated!

Hearing the sternness in Gu Li Sheng’s voice, all the disciples of the Zephyr Academy were suddenly fearful. But they were not afraid as they all knew that the one that had been responsible for Li Zi Mu’s death had been Jun Xie and it had nothing to do with them. Gu Li Sheng’s rage was all directed at Jun Xie!

They would just need to be patient and enjoy the show.

Ning Xin hid within the crowd and smiled secretly to herself, her eyes filled with malice as she stared at Jun Xie from among the sea of disciples.

But Yin Yan, who was standing next to Ning Xin was feeling that something did not seem right.

It was a fact that Gu Li Sheng had shown Li Zi Mu favoured treatment, but if anyone was to say that Li Zi Mu’s understanding

of the Spirit Healing Technique surpassed Gu Li Sheng, he wouldn't be able to make himself believe it in the slightest.

In the whole time that Li Zi Mu had been in the Spirit Healer faculty, he had not even been able to grasp the most basic of fundamentals. Hence, it was impossible that Li Zi Mu's knowledge of the Spirit Healing Technique would surpass Gu Li Sheng! That would have to be the biggest joke!

Yin Yan could not help but to feel that something was out of place but no matter how much he thought about it, he could not identify what was wrong.

"I had always thought that the Zephyr Academy, being one of the top three institutions of learning, its disciples would surely be logical, quicker of mind and possess a high sense of propriety. But I have found that I was wrong." The stern expression on Gu Li Sheng's face suddenly let out a derisory laugh.

"Today, I would like to introduce someone to all of you here. This person, is the very freakish monster that had far surpassed me with his deep understanding of the Spirit Healing Technique!" Gu Li Sheng was already walking towards the crowd as he spoke.

All the disciples of the Zephyr Academy were all struck dumb as silence fell in the air filled with surprise.

Introduce?

What did that mean?

Isn't Li Zi Mu already dead? Did Gu Li Sheng intend to dig up Li Zi Mu's body? To confer upon Li Zi Mu an official title?

The disciples all stared flummoxed at Gu Li Sheng as he approached the crowd, and he suddenly turned into another direction when he was just about ten meters away!

Under the baleful stares of all the other disciples, Gu Li Sheng came to the two lone figures who had been isolated by the rest.

“Jun Xie, you must have suffered a lot throughout this period.” Gu Li Sheng stood right before Jun Xie, his face unreservedly apologetic as the crowd gasped loudly.

Jun Wu Xie nevertheless shook her head.

Gu Li Sheng stretched out a big hand, and led Jun Wu Xie to walk back with him, to come stand right before the whole crowd.

“Jun Xie, is the little monstrous prodigy that I mentioned. The devil youth that had eclipsed me with her unsurpassed understanding of the Spirit Healing Technique!” Gu Li Sheng’s chest was puffed up proudly, as he loudly announced the earth shaking news to all the disciples and teachers of the Zephyr Academy gathered before them!

At that moment, the entire square was hushed into a deathly silence. And in a blink, in the next moment, the whole crowd exploded into a clamour so loud that it almost tore the skies apart!

“Jun Xie!?”

“How can it be Jun Xie!?”

Didn’t Gu Li Sheng say it was all a misunderstanding at that time? He said that Jun Xie was not the disciple he picked! What is happening here!?”

The shocking news sparked off an inferno as Gu Li Sheng’s words sank into the crowd. The inferno was spreading at the speed of light reaching all the way to the ends of the sea of disciples.

Shock, doubt, horror..... Countless complicated emotions flooded the sea of disciples as it dawned upon them what their past actions had done!

Chapter 588: “Mobbed with Slaps (6)”

They would never have dreamed that the lone disciple that was acknowledged by Gu Li Sheng himself would actually be Jun Xie!

The disciple that had been branded a despicable youth the very first day he had been admitted into the Zephyr Academy!

And all the curses that Jun Xie had suffered under had all started from the Spirit Healing faculty itself!

But now, the sudden turn of events had changed everything dramatically and all the disciples could not believe it.

How..... was all of it possible?

“All this time, the disciple that I handpicked personally had only been Jun Xie, and Jun Xie alone. I had thought that I had found myself the most suitable disciple, but never did I expect to find a monstrous prodigy that I could not help but admire. Jun Xie had only needed barely two hours to fully and completely grasp the concepts behind the Spirit Healing Technique and was even able to suggest ways to improve the technique.” As Gu Li Sheng spoke, his face was filled with an expression of utmost pride.

“The Spirit Healing Technique is a matter of grave importance. In order to allow Jun Xie the time and space to complete his work on improving the technique, and to prevent anyone with ulterior motives to cause him any harm, I had no other choice at that time but to temporarily release him from the Spirit Healer faculty. To avoid raising any unwanted suspicions, another freshman was randomly picked to fill up the vacancy left by Jun Xie’s temporary departure. All these changes were carried out with the Headmaster’s prior approval and I had clearly explained it to the newly selected disciple. To avoid exposing Jun Xie, I had always told everyone else that it had all just been a big misunderstanding.”

When Gu Li Sheng finished, his brow creased up alarmingly, his tone of voice lost the gentleness that was present just moments before, and his gaze grew sharp as he swept his eyes over the gathered disciples of the Zephyr Academy before he said: “But the one thing that I had not expected, was how foolish the disciples of our Zephyr Academy had shown themselves to be. You were so easily convinced of those malicious and unfounded rumours others spread, and went on to repeatedly accuse and wound Jun Xie, which greatly disappointed me. The truth of the whole matter is known to me and known by the Headmaster as well. Right from the start, Jun Xie had never attempted or intended to steal anyone’s position as that position had been his right from the start! Jun Xie was the one that had asked to be released from that position which opened up an otherwise unavailable opportunity to others. All of you did not bother about the truth and without having witnessed it, you believed those vicious rumours as the truth. The curses and admonishments all of you threw at Jun Xie thereafter had truly blemished the prestigious name of the Zephyr Academy!”

Gu Li Sheng’s strongly worded speech completely shattered all the various poisonous rumours surrounding Jun Xie all this time! And it had inadvertently given one hard slap to all those disciples who had hurled all those groundless accusations at Jun Xie!

Gu Li Sheng’s words, made all the youths before him fall silent, unable to offer a single word of retort.

Fan Qi, who had not said a single word stepped forward at that moment. He gave out a big sigh before he said: “I can bear witness that every single word Gu Li Sheng said today is nothing but the truth. In the beginning, when he spoke to me about the matter, I was completely shocked. I could not believe that a mere fourteen year old youth could surpass Gu Li Sheng’s understanding of the Spirit Healing Technique. But I knew that Gu Li Sheng, as the founder of the Spirit Healing Technique, treated everything

associated to the technique like his own child and would never joke about it. I trusted in his eye in recognising talent and I trusted in his judgement then. And now, the facts prove that I was not wrong about Gu Li Sheng, and Gu Li Sheng was right about Jun Xie.”

When that was mentioned, Gu Li Sheng paused a moment and began to say: “It was just recently, and I do not know who is the person responsible for it, but that person had suddenly wanted to investigate into the cause of Li Zi Mu’s death, which suddenly threw up another round of vicious rumours to be spread within the whole academy. And in order to present to all of you the real truth of the matter, I personally initiated an investigation into it. Li Zi Mu was ascertained to have been killed by a Spirit Beast as the mortal wound on his body was seen to have been caused by the claws and fangs of a ferocious beast, and not by human hands. And it is obvious, as right before your eyes now, all of you can see that the target of all your suspicions right here. His bestial ring spirit is only a tiny palm sized little black cat. May I ask all of you here, how could a puny little cat like this break the neck of a full grown youth in his teens with a single bite?”

Chapter 589: “Slapping the Mob (7)”

Both the revered Gu Li Sheng and the respected Fan Qi had stood forward and told everyone the whole truth behind the matter and used their unblemished reputation and fame to vouch for Jun Xie’s integrity. Compared to the flimsy reasonings behind those vicious rumours, the proofs and evidences those two produced were found to be much more trustworthy and ultimately more believable!

One was the Head of the Spirit Healing faculty, and the other was the Headmaster of the entire Zephyr Academy. These two entities, with the esteemed positions they held, gave them the highest authority above anyone else in the whole Zephyr Academy, and they did not need to go to such an extent to protect a quiet and inconspicuous freshman for no good reason!

At that moment, all the negative names that Jun Xie had been branded with were completely cleared. No one would still dare to link Jun Xie to all those baseless and unfounded rumours ever again!

What all the disciples felt for Jun Xie now was no longer hatred or disgust, but they found themselves filled with shock and amazement for the youth.

Not even in their wildest dreams, would they have expected that the truth would turn out to be like this!

The very one they had all cursed and sworn at all this while, was in actual fact the biggest victim in this whole episode!

In fact, the one who had in actuality taken over someone else’s position in the Spirit Healer faculty was not Jun Xie in the first place, but was Li Zi Mu!

“I can vouch for his character as well! Jun Xie is nothing like what the rumours are saying about him! If not for Jun Xie, I would not have been able to get out of the Battle Spirits Forest alive!” A

thin and weak youth had suddenly stepped out of the crowd and loudly proclaimed after bolstering his courage to speak up.

“I can vouch for him too!”

“And me!”

In quick succession, over ten disciples had stepped out from among the gathered mass of disciples. They were all without exception, from the team that had been with Li Zi Mu when they had initially gone into the Battle Spirits Forest.

“I was Li Zi Mu’s assigned mentor right from the beginning. Initially, I had been just like all of you and completely believed everything that Li Zi Mu said, and gravely misunderstood Jun Xie. But it wasn’t until the Spirit Hunt that I realised I couldn’t have been more wrong! The despicable one was never Jun Xie, but Li Zi Mu!” The youth who had mentored Li Zi Mu stood forth unabashed, and told everyone all that had really happened in the Battle Spirits Forest, without leaving out a single detail.

The words he was telling now, was exactly what he had repeated countless times before. When Jun Xie was being mercilessly cursed and sworn at, he had valiantly tried to defend Jun Xie then.

But, being just the ordinary disciple that he was, no one believed a single word he said!

But today, things were completely different!

Those very same words, when spoken aloud before the crowd today, caused an uproar to sweep through the sea of disciples present!

They had never imagined that Li Zi Mu could be so despicable and shameless. Besides having been the one that took Jun Xie’s position, he had still gone around and spread false rumours about Jun Xie’s duplicity and despicable intentions. Li Zi Mu had even abandoned his teammates during the Spirit Hunt who had gotten themselves injured by saving him. He had at the first instance,

shamelessly clung onto the powerful Fan Jin for protection and Jun Xie had magnanimously not taken it against Li Zi Mu and accepted him readily!

The real truth behind all of it threw Li Zi Mu's name into the mud and it completely turned Jun Xie's image in the minds of everyone present!

All those youths who had previously endlessly lambasted Jun Xie before, all those youths who had previously cursed Jun Xie mercilessly in the past, and also all those who had fervently wished that Jun Xie would be expelled from the Zephyr Academy, now all hung their heads low guiltily, filled with regret and shame, not daring to even look at Jun Xie.

At that moment, they all wished the ground would just open up, and swallow them whole, hiding them from the guilt and embarrassment they all felt, as their cheeks burned up, in a bright red glow.

They were unable to face anyone, when they realised just how dumb they had been.

They had been led around by the nose by those false rumours, they had naively believed what their ears heard. Even when the truth of the matter had not been clear, they had blindly followed the crowd and followed those vicious rumours, to time and again, falsely accused and smeared Jun Xie's name.

It was just as Gu Li Sheng had said. Their very actions, had brought great shame to the Zephyr Academy's name!

Gu Li Sheng observed with satisfaction the reactions of all the disciples before him. "Today, before the presence of everyone here, I would like to once again, extend my invitation to Jun Xie, to return to the Spirit Healing faculty. I hope you will accept." Gu Li Sheng asked in humility as he looked at Jun Xie, slightly lowering his head, to demonstrate the guilt he felt, towards the little lad.

Chapter 590: “Slapping the Mob (8)”

Jun Wu Xie nodded.

Gu Li Sheng stared at the crowd and said: “From now onwards, Jun Xie would be a member of the Spirit Healer faculty. But all of you listen up here! He is not my disciple, I am not qualified to teach or guide him, and neither am I qualified enough to be his Teacher! He will henceforth hold half of the power in the Spirit Healing faculty! Even though he is admitted into the Spirit Healing faculty as a disciple, no one must ever treat Jun Xie like a disciple!”

As Gu Li Sheng spoke those words, his gaze fell onto the figure of Qian Yuan He among the crowd but quickly moved to sweep over the entire crowd.

Among all the Teachers in the Zephyr Academy, Qian Yuan He was one who often said he was ashamed of Jun Xie, and had claimed that Jun Xie was not qualified to receive his teachings.

And Gu Li Sheng’s words today, had delivered a slap across his face as well.

Qian Yuan He was a nobody in the Zephyr Academy.

He was just an ordinary teacher in the Beast Spirit faculty, and teachers and instructors who excelled over him were a dime a dozen!

Moreover to the eyes of Gu Li Sheng, who held complete authority in the revered Spirit Healing faculty?

Compare to Gu Li Sheng, Qian Yuan He was not even good enough to carry his shoes!

Gu Li Sheng had proclaimed that he himself did not possess the qualification to teach or instruct Jun Xie, that would come to mean that Qian Yuan He was even more unqualified. Qian Yuan He had once accused Jun Xie of not being showing any inclination to learn, had undesirable character traits. All these words were now

all thrown back in his face with Gu Li Sheng's words today!

The insignificant Qian Yuan He holding contempt for Jun Xie? It seems now the joke had been turned on him!

With just that brief glance from Gu Li Sheng, Qian Yuan He went deathly pale, and his shoulders started to shake. He subconsciously shrank back into the crowd, wishing he could sink deep into the ground at that moment, and never appear before people again.

From being a despicable cad that everyone cursed and swore at, to suddenly become the genius who had suffered in silence while undertaking such a prodigious task, Jun Xie had successfully reinvented her long ragged tattered image within the Zephyr Academy within just a short hour, and dealt all the disciples and faculty one big slap across all their faces.

Under the watchful eyes of everyone in the whole academy, Gu Li Sheng led Jun Xie away. Jun Xie had not said a single word throughout but just watched on quietly at the side as every single nosy parker got their well deserved slaps.

After Gu Li Sheng and Jun Xie had left, the entire exploded into a deafening chatter of voices. Everyone started talking about today's shocking revelations and those that had previously cursed Jun Xie the most quickly ran away, their tails between their legs, afraid that they might be skinned alive by the suddenly unruly mob.

If Jun Xie was useless trash, what would they be?

Worse than trash.....

Today, everyone in the Zephyr Academy, from the top to the bottom, had been collectively slapped. All the disciples, and even the teachers, were all looking at each other guiltily. The red and hot burning sensation on their faces made them feel as if they had really been physically slapped.

Under the ruckus in the square, the deeply ashamed disciples and the members of the faculty did not want to remain there a moment

longer. Every moment they stayed there made their faces burn hotter and they quickly decided to beat a hasty retreat. But the realisation that came with today's events was deeply etched onto their hearts.

The crowd in the square quickly dispersed, but Ning Xin had remained in her spot, completely frozen in place.

“How can it be..... Impossible..... How could Jun Xie be the disciple that Gu Li Sheng had picked.....” Ning Xin's eyes were impossibly wide, and she had still not recovered from the shock. No one would be able to comprehend how hard the shock had hit her when she had heard all those words earlier!

Her mind was filled with an endless and incessant buzzing. The plans she had schemed up so confidently all this while had suddenly crumbled to dust, falling apart all around her.

Gu Li Sheng had wanted to avenge Li Zi Mu!?

That now sounded so ridiculous and the joke had most definitely fallen onto her.

Throughout his speech, Gu Li Sheng had not even bothered to mention Li Zi Mu's name and only termed him as a freshman. It was obvious, that Gu Li Sheng was privy to all of Li Zi Mu's undesirable actions. The contempt he held for Li Zi Mu, could very well have exceeded everyone else's!

Chapter 591: “Slapping the Mob (9)”

It suddenly dawned on Ning Xin that right from the beginning, she had already been wrong!

She had underestimated Jun Xie’s abilities and she had also been wrong about the faculty Jun Xie was actually in. All her ploys had been made based on wrong information right from the start and now that everything was revealed, all the schemes she plotted would not do her a single ounce of good.....

“Senior Ning.....” Yin Yan looked dreadfully fearful as he stared at Ning Xin. Before Jun Xie’s real identity was exposed, Gu Li Sheng’s choice of words had made him raise his suspicions, but he had not been able to pinpoint what was wrong then.

It was not until everything was revealed that he realised, just like everyone else, he had been hoodwinked by Li Zi Mu’s single side of the story.

“This cannot be..... How can it be.....” A panic suddenly overtook Ning Xin and Yin Yan hurried over to hold her up.

“Senior Ning, what do we do now?” Yin Yan was truly terrified. He had already grown rather fearful of Jun Xie previously. Now, before everyone in the entire Zephyr Academy, Gu Li Sheng had severely criticised all the disciples of the Spirit Healer faculty to be incompetent. When he had admonished everyone for believing in the rumours so easily, all the disciples in the Spirit Healer faculty had naturally be included.

After all, the disciples of the Spirit Healer faculty had been just as guilty in their cursing and swearing of Jun Xie!

If Jun Xie had just been an ordinary disciple, things might not have gotten this bad, but Jun Xie had been the lone disciple that Gu Li Sheng personally acknowledged and valued heavily. With that in mind, Gu Li Sheng would not continue to instruct those

disciples he had forced himself to accept previously as their Master any longer.....

That thought alone, made Yin Yan tremble at the consequences.

All that he had relied on all this time in the academy, had been his envied position in the Spirit Healer faculty.....

If he was to lose that, he would end up.....

“Fan Jin knew.....” Ning Xin suddenly caught Yin Yan’s arm in a vice grip, pulling herself upright.

“Fan Jin had known it right from the start! He must have known! Or why would he have persisted to defend Jun Xie so many times!? Or why would he be willing to even risk his own reputation to ensure Jun Xie’s safety!? Ha ha ha! Ha ha ha! Because he had known it all this while! That Jun Xie was the disciple that Gu Li Sheng valued! Ha ha ha! Fan Jin, oh Fan Jin! I, Ning Xin has truly underestimated you!” A mouthful of blood suddenly gushed out from Ning Xin’s mouth. Everything had been smooth sailing for her in the academy all her life but ever since she met Jun Xie, she found herself faced with countless obstacle. All the schemes that she had taken great pains to plot were completely shredded and torn apart before they could take effect. She had prided herself to be highly intelligent, but now she had been reduced to become the biggest joke!

A moment’s slip up, had caused her to lose all that she had!

There was no longer a chance that Jun Xie would become the underdog anymore. With Gu Li Sheng behind him, it was no longer possible that Jun Xie would submit to her when he became the underdog that everyone despised.

Her ploy to win Jun Xie over to her side had now evaporated entirely.

While Fan Jin had supported Jun Xie right from from the beginning and they had established an unbreakable bond in their

alliance!

The knot that had formed in Ning Xin's chest, almost suffocated her then.

She stood there laughing hysterically, like she had lost her mind.

Having witnessed Jun Xie's ring spirit herself, Ning Xin would never be able to accept Fan Qi's earlier explanation to be the truth.

Tiny cat?

For Heaven's sake, that was a massive ferocious black beast!

But that fact was known only to her and Yin Yan. Jun Xie had always only presented his ring spirit in the black cat's form before everyone else, and even if the two of them had gone to tell everyone that Jun Xie's ring spirit was in actuality not an ordinary black cat, they would never be believed.

She had lost this time, she had lost really badly!

Ning Xin's hysterical laughter continued, as was the blood that flowed out from her mouth. The intense rage that wrecked at her heart and the utter sense of defeat that overwhelmed her caused Ning Xin to lose all calm and any conscious sense of decorum, her usual grace and genteel manners forgotten.

Chapter 592: “Slapping the Mob (10)”

Yin Yan stared at Ning Xin with fear in his eyes, and the terror was beginning to spread throughout his body.

After today's events, no one would be able to use anything from Jun Xie's past to smear or slander him any longer.

Gu Li Sheng had personally invited Jun Xie to return to the Spirit Healer faculty in such a grand fashion. Not a single one of them would dare go offend Jun Xie in the slightest now.

Just for the sole fact that he was more knowledgeable than Gu Li Sheng in the Spirit Healing Technique was already enough to make everyone submit. Jun Xie's status among the disciples of the Zephyr Academy had been elevated to a height that was unshakable. All those who had cursed and spat at his name, with those that had completely despised him as a person, had from today onwards, found their prior self justified reasons and weak excuses for doing so, completely smashed to smithereens. Just for the one glaring fact that Jun Xie had a full grasp of the Spirit Healing Technique had made everyone back off in deference, with not a single one among them daring to show him the slightest affront.

Yin Yan raised his head to stare into the grey and overcast sky looming above him.

A complete change had come over the Zephyr Academy, leaving a great mark on this day, that will be well remembered long into the future.

The fear in Yin Yan filled his heart. He summoned all his courage and dragged Ning Xin, who was acting like she had lost her mind, along with him, to leave the deserted square.

And after the duo left, an unnoticed skinny and ragged lone figure was left standing, far in one corner of the spacious plaza.

Ah Jing's face was pale, as he stared at the bare and empty square.

He had clearly heard every last word that Gu Li Sheng and Fan Qi had said earlier. Just like everyone else, Ah Jing had come to the square with great anticipation, thinking that Jun Xie would be shamed and thrown out of the Zephyr Academy by Gu Li Sheng today. Never had he expected that he had come here today to hear the truth of the matter, a truth that he could not make himself believe in.

Ah Jing suddenly found his legs buckling out under him and he fell to the ground. His fingers curled and his nails scratched upon the hard ground, leaving bright red blood trails on the floor.

.....

What was most humiliating was when the person you most despised, stepped upon your face pushing in into the ground.

Although throughout the whole process, Jun Wu Xie had not said a single word, she had inadvertently trampled on all the faces of every single disciple and faculty member into the ground and had even stamped hard on a few of them.

Jun Xie was "invited" back to the Spirit Healer faculty by Gu Li Sheng on that very same day, and all the existing disciples could only watch on with their faces paled as the duo walked in, and all the other disciples did not even dare to approach them a single step.

Approach them?

Their faces were still burning with shame.

Their identities as disciples of the Spirit Healer faculty that they had been so proud of, had been exposed to be a farce and that Gu Li Sheng had been unwilling forced to grant them their discipleship due to the pressure from Fan Qi, the Headmaster.

They had never gained Gu Li Sheng's approval at all in the first

place.

But they had been completely ignorant and gone with the flow, and followed everyone else to scorn, ridicule and bash at Jun Xie's name and reputation.

They were just.....

Utterly contemptible!

Jun Wu Xie followed Gu Li Sheng into his office. Only upon the moment the door shut, was Gu Li Sheng able to relax his tightly tensed up body, and the hard lines on his face suddenly became gentle.

"How was it? Was that an acceptable response to your request?" Gu Li Sheng asked, looking smilingly at Jun Xie. Today's performance had been specially put together for Jun Xie's sake and he hoped that would at least make up to Jun Xie in some way for the oppression he had undergone during this period.

"Yes." Jun Wu Xie nodded.

Gu Li Sheng had put up a splendid show this time, and Jun Wu Xie was completely satisfied.

"Ha ha. That's great. This was the first time I created such a big stir." Gu Li Sheng was finally able to swallow his heart back down that had been lodged in his throat all this time. He had firstly decided to make such a grand show of it today to express his sincerity to Jun Xie, and also to fight for the sheer injustice that Jun Xie had suffered.

Just by hearing those vicious rumours, would already cause much distress to many people. The fact that Jun Xie had been able to endure and bear up so well under all that pressure, had gained Jun Xie the utmost respect from Gu Li Sheng.

If it had been anyone else, they would most definitely have jumped out to defend themselves at the first instance. Jun Xie had instead been able to take it in stride, and only exposed the truth of

the matter after the task assigned to her was completed. That endless patience and stoic perseverance, made Gu Li Sheng admire the little lad all the more.

Chapter 593: “Slapping the Mob (11)”

“You should just come to the Spirit Healer faculty from today onwards. Of course, if you have anything else that you are busy with, you can just go ahead and do it. There is no need for you to inform me.” Gu Li Sheng was extremely polite with his words as both his hands were gripped tightly around the scroll that Jun Xie had given him previously. He had pored over it for the past one day and night, reading and rereading it, but he was still unable to fully grasp everything written in it and he was anxious to seek Jun Xie’s guidance.

Gu Li Sheng allowed Jun Xie the highest autonomy and that was something he had never ever granted to any disciple before.

But Jun Wu Xie deserved every single bit of that and all that she had received.

She possessed the required capabilities and even when Gu Li Sheng provided her with the unprecedented privilege, not a single person dared raise a single voice in protest.

Her capabilities had even developed the Spirit Healing Technique, bring it to a level above Gu Li Sheng’s!

“I will need to leave for a few days after this.” Jun Wu Xie said softly, immediately stating she had other business to attend to.

Gu Li Sheng panicked and tried to open his mouth. He had not expected that Jun Xie would have other things to attend to immediately.....

He suddenly felt dejected, but he could not renege on his own words.

His heart winced the more he thought about it.

“Cough..... So, how many days will you be gone?” Gu Li Sheng was looking rather awkward. He had really wanted Jun Xie to explain in more detail what he had written in the scroll.

“Not long.” Jun Wu Xie replied.

The show has not ended, and she needed to go complete it. Otherwise, everyone will miss the climax she had planned for them.

“Alright, you go attend to your business then. Once you are finished, can you come back here and look for me? Actually..... about this..... scroll you handed to me..... there is one portion recorded..... in here, that I do not really understand.” Gu Li Sheng’s face was red with embarrassment. He did not think it was entirely appropriate for a fully grown middle aged man to have to come seeking guidance from a little youth like this. It made him feel rather..... awkward and abashed.

But his obsession with the Spirit Healing Technique forced those words to spill out from his mouth.

Jun Wu Xie stared at Gu Li Sheng. Those penetrating eyes seemed to be saying to him: “It’s something so simple, and you can’t understand it?”.

Gu Li Sheng turned a brighter shade under that gaze.

“Alright.” As Gu Li Sheng’s face was turning redder and redder, Jun Wu Xie finally replied to agree.

Gu Li Sheng nodded with a smile on his face.

“This is the jade emblem of the Spirit Healer faculty. Keep it well.” Gu Li Sheng presented the jade emblem of the Spirit Healer faculty before Jun Xie.

Jun Wu Xie shook her head instead.

Gu Li Sheng was suddenly confused.

“After today’s events, no one will still be unaware of my identity.” Jun Wu Xie replied softly. The jade emblem’s purpose was meant to show the other disciples which faculty the holders of the emblem belonged to. But now that Gu Li Sheng had rocked and

shook up the entire academy when he had severely berated every single one of them in their faces today, Jun Wu Xie sincerely believed, that her face would henceforth become a more obvious and prominent proof of her position in the academy than any other emblems that Gu Li Sheng could give her.

“That’s true.” Gu Li Sheng slipped the jade piece back into his sleeves.

Gu Li Sheng could not help himself and held Jun Xie back to ask a few questions about some parts of the scroll that he was not too clear about. It was quite a while later when he finally let Jun Xie leave.

Jun Wu Xie stepped out from Gu Li Sheng’s office. When she descended the stairs and reached the atrium downstairs, she saw a bunch of Spirit Healer faculty disciples huddled together. They were hiding in a corner, as they peeked warily at her.

“Jun..... Jun Xie.....” One of the youths among them was suddenly pushed out from the group, and he stuttered as he looked guiltily at Jun Xie.

When they thought back to the numerous times they had gossiped and pointed at Jun Xie behind his back, they were deeply ashamed of themselves and they were feeling extremely awkward to face Jun Xie again. But.....

Gu Li Sheng held Jun Xie in the highest regard and if Jun Xie held grudges against them, they wouldn’t be able to survive in the Spirit Healer faculty thereafter.

All the disciples of the Spirit Healer faculty did not doubt for a moment, that if Jun Xie was to ask Gu Li Sheng to expel all of them out of the Spirit Healer faculty, Gu Li Sheng would not hesitate to do it in the slightest.

Chapter 594: “Seventh Slap (1)”

Even after knowing that Gu Li Sheng had been forced to accept them as disciples, the youths nevertheless still greatly cherished their identity as a disciple of the Spirit Healer faculty and would do anything to retain their positions.

They were very reluctant to lose them.

“Sor..... Sorry..... We were dumb and naive to have believed those baseless rumours. I hope you can find it within your generous heart to forgive people as despicable as us! Please forgive us all!” The youth formally took a ninety degree bow, pleading for Jun Xie’s forgiveness.

The rest of the disciples behind him, all bowed as well.

Jun Wu Xie cast them a glance, and did not even say a single word, before she proceeded to continue walking away.

The bunch of youths waited a long while in their spots with their backs bent and did not get a reply. When they raised their heads, they found that Jun Xie had already walked out through the Spirit Healer faculty’s main doors without giving them the least bit of attention! The world crashed down upon them at that moment, and they sobbed at the impending loss to come.

“What.... What should we do..... Does that mean he..... won’t forgive us?” The youths huddled close together and cried, visualising the inevitable sorry scene of them being chased out of the Spirit Healer faculty.

Jun Wu Xie was completely oblivious to the indescribable bind the disciples were caught in and was already making her way back to the bamboo grove.

Along the way, countless pairs of eyes were trained on that slowly moving petite figure. Every single one of those gazes that fell upon Jun Wu Xie were no longer laced with contempt or

mockery like before, but replaced with deep shame and a sense of fear.

When they see Jun Xie now, it invariably reminded them all of the shame they had felt that morning when Gu Li Sheng and Fan Qi had slapped them all with their admonishments, and none of them dared to take a single step to approach Jun Xie.

Hiding their faces from the shame they felt, the disciples slung away and hid like mice into corners. As for those disciples that happened to come face to face with Jun Xie, they found the strength suddenly leaving their legs when they saw the petite figure, trying their fastest to scramble out of his way.

Jun Wu Xie did not seem to notice, paying them no attention as she continued on her way to the bamboo grove.

In the bamboo grove, Fan Jin was excitedly recounting the morning's glorious events to Fan Zhuo. Fan Jin's face was flushed and his voice was exhilarated, how he wished was able to reenact the whole scene that played out at the square that morning.

Fan Zhuo smiled and did not say a word, but his eyes were lit, sparkling with joy.

"Hee hee..... You should have seen it. It was really most exhilarating! You remember that grumpy teacher, Qian Yuan He? The one in the Beast Spirit faculty? He had previously gone all around telling everyone about all of Jun Xie's faults. Today, Uncle Gu's words almost made him want to go smash his head on the wall to kill himself in shame, it made me so happy then..... Ha ha ha....." Fan Jin was getting more animated the further he narrated. He had suddenly brought two big jars of wine here to celebrate his good mood today on this rare occasion.

Besides Jun Wu Xie, the next person who was happiest about today's turn of events was inexorably Fan Jin.

In that gloomy period, Jun Xie had suffered the endless curses

and got herself viciously sworn at. But on the other hand, Fan Jin, who had been the one who had given everything he had to protect Jun Wu Xie while being privy to the truth behind it all had had an extremely hard time holding it all in to the point of almost bursting.

“Little Xie, you’re back!” The moment Fan Jin saw Jun Wu Xie come in, he jumped up excitedly and his tall and towering frame swayed and tilted from having stood up too suddenly. Fan Zhuo nimbly stretched out an arm to lend his brother some support.

Jun Wu Xie sat down at the table and looked at the slightly tipsy Fan Jin.

“Today, we really managed..... to make that bunch of bastards shut up, ‘hic’.....” Fan Jin managed to slur with a goofy grin as he fell back down onto his chair.

Fan Zhuo turned to Jun Xie and gave a helpless shrug.

Ever since Fan Jin had stepped in, he had not stopped talking, and neither had his wine cup, which had been barely seen parted from his lips, in an obvious display of his joyous mood today.

Jun Wu Xie and Fan Zhuo were non drinkers and they watched Fan Jin as he chugged down the two large jars. Soon, Fan Jin was roaringly drunk and he quickly fell face down on the table and slept snoring loudly.

“My Big Brother is feeling really happy today.” Fan Zhuo smiled awkwardly as he looked at his completely drunk and unconscious elder sibling. But he knew in his heart, that his brother was genuinely happy today.

“I will need to leave for a period.” Jun Wu Xie said suddenly.

Fan Zhuo was slightly taken aback by the sudden announcement.

Chapter 595: “Seventh Slap (2)”

Get your early access on Patreon now~

“Ask Fan Jin to get dumb Qiao and the others to come over here tomorrow. If there is anything you want to know, you can ask them about it then.” Jun Wu Xie said as she poured herself a cup of tea.

“You mean about the Rui Lin Army?” Fan Zhuo asked, with an inquisitive look on his face. He had earlier asked Jun Xie about his connection with the Rui Lin Army but the little rascal had been too lazy to explain it to him and pushed the topic away in a display of sheer laziness.

Jun Wu Xie nodded.

Fan Zhuo watched Jun Wu Xie intently, seemingly thoughtful before he asked: “The Rui Lin Army will arrive tomorrow, won’t they?”

“Mmm.” Jun Wu Xie nodded again.

The corners of Fan Zhuo’s lips raised slightly. The Rui Lin Army will come here tomorrow, and Jun Xie was telling him he would need to be away for a period. The two seemingly separate events happening at the same time inevitably led Fan Zhuo to think there must be a link between them.

However, Jun Wu Xie still had no intentions of explaining any bit of it to Fan Zhuo and after she carelessly threw Fan Zhuo a few hasty words of farewell, she quickly left.

The distance from the Qi Kingdom to the Zephyr Academy wasn’t too far away and the way they would take to come would invariably be through the main thoroughfare.

Long Qi was leading his team of Rui Lin Army soldiers, a grand and majestic procession, passing through the wide road, their shining silver armoured soldiers sitting tall upon great war horses.

The grandiose air emanating from the contingent of battle hardened men made all the people that passed them on the road scramble out of their way in a hurry.

“Boss, Young Miss is really at the Zephyr Academy?” A soldier beside Long Qi asked, with deep longing showing in his eyes.

Long Qi cast a glance at the soldier, his gaze solemn.

“We are in no position to probe into the Your Miss’ business.”

The soldier shrank back, and nodded hurriedly. But a glint of anticipation nevertheless remained in his eyes.

As the contingent passed the main thoroughfare, the men from the Rui Lin Army had to enter a smaller path. Although narrower, the path stretched out, bathed in tranquility, albeit, a little windy. The smaller path allowed only three horses to march abreast, and dense trees lined both sides of the path. As it was already dusk, there were not much people seen on it.

Suddenly, a figure appeared on the path. From afar, the setting sun’s rays lit in a radiant glow from behind the figure, masking the figure’s face in shadows. The light of dusk showered the area around the figure from the back, creating a golden halo to surround him.

Long Qi frowned deeply, and gestured sharply with his hand. All his men immediately perked up, wary and alert.

However, when Long Qi led his men forward, he had just gotten closer to the figure when he suddenly swung off his steed in a hurry and fell quickly on one knee!

“Young Miss!”

.....

In the Zephyr Academy, one day had passed. The turmoil that had stirred up the Spirit Healer faculty had begun to subside. But the residual tremors had not yet completely stopped when another

piece of earth splitting news hit, and quickly stirred up another storm that raged and tore throughout the entire academy once again.

Before the gates of the Zephyr Academy, hundreds of armoured soldiers, riding tall atop gallant war steeds, stood blocking the entire entryway. On the backs of the huge armoured war horses, were towering men, their faces hard as forged steel, the auras they gave out fiercely menacing. Their stalwart and straight backed poise, made all the disciples who had gathered behind the academy's gates, fear to take another step forward.

But, in the midst of the contingent of fearsome and intimidating group of soldiers, there was a lone figure that stood out different.

Dressed in pure white, her demure grace evident atop the high steed, her face flawlessly beautiful. All the Zephyr Academy's disciples gathered there, were suddenly bedazzled, without a single exception.

Within the Zephyr Academy, they had no lack of beautiful youths. But none could measure up to the girl sitting atop the handsome steed before their eyes.

The white dressed girl, looked to still be rather young. The mesmerizing aura surrounding her made people inexorably stunned by her beauty, but also drove an inexplicable fear into them of profaning the flawless beauty with their gaze. Her face was cold as frost and expressionless, her crystal clear eyes glinted with a chill. As she passed the crowd of disciples, those eyes did not fall a single moment, on any one of them.

Cold, chilly, and somehow terrifying.

"Who are these people?" A youth behind the gates whispered softly.

"It's the Rui Lin Army! The most ferocious strike force!" A sharp eyed youth pointed at the banners flapping in the wind and cried

out softly.

Chapter 596: “Seventh Slap (3)”

The Qi Kingdom might just be a small nation, but the fame of the Rui Lin Army, was known far and wide throughout the lands!

Known to be the most ferocious strike force, they had appeared right before the gates of the Zephyr Academy. What could they be here for?

“When Senior Lu left, didn’t he say..... Senior Ning..... had attempted to have..... some General from the Rui Lin Army..... killed?” A quick minded youth suddenly remembered what Lu Wei Jie had claimed, just before he left.

On the day when Lu Wei Jie had been chased out of the Zephyr Academy, what he said then before his departure had kicked up a huge storm and it had dragged Ning Xin’s reputation into the mud then. But the news that Jun Xie had murdered Li Zi Mu quickly overshadowed the accusations thrown at Ning Xin and they were slowly forgotten. With the Rui Lin Army appearing in such a grand fashion before the Zephyr Academy’s gates, the matter that had almost faded from their memories quickly reignited and the rumour mill started whirring furiously once again, kicked into high gear.

[Does this mean that everything Lu Wei Jie said was the truth?]

Fan Qi hurried over to the main gates shortly after. When he saw the grand formation of the Rui Lin Army, a shock went through his body and his heart beat furiously.

Among the gathered mass of towering, proud, and stalwart warriors, Fan Qi could not help but notice a figure that looked totally different in contrast, a young girl seated high upon a warhorse in the front beside Long Qi, who commanded an unnaturally overwhelming presence. Her identity was most definitely someone extraordinary!

“I was not aware of General Long Qi’s arrival and I hope you’ll excuse my tardiness in my welcome. I would implore our respected guests to come in for a chat.” Fan Qi was trying his hardest to put forth a composed front. Since the last Spirit Hunt had ended, he had known that this dreadful day would come. The reason he had agreed to expel Lu Wei Jie and the others in such a hasty manner before was an attempt to appease the Rui Lin Army’s and Mu Chen’s rage.

Long Qi nodded and raised a hand up. More than a hundred soldiers behind him immediately pulled on their reins and all the warhorses stood rigidly still.

That precision and uniformity in the movements of the soldiers made all the eyes of the gathered disciples light up in awe, and their heartbeats reached a fervor, their blood coming to a boil.

The disciples were at that age where their youthful exuberance were at their peaks. Which youth among those disciples wouldn’t idolise such an impressive array of fully armored soldiers?

Long Qi swung himself off his horse and extended his hands out to help the petite young girl beside him get off the tall horse.

“And this would be.....” Fan Qi looked at the beautiful but cold young lady, and said cautiously.

“The Young Miss of the Lin Palace, Jun Wu Xie.” Long Qi straightened his back upright and replied in a grand voice.

[It’s the Young Miss of the Lin Palace!]

Fan Qi’s forced facade of composure cracked slightly in his shock. The Rui Lin Army were subservient only to the Qi Kingdom’s Duke, Jun Xian. The Imperial Emperor held no authority over the Rui Lin Army and they only took orders from people from the Jun Family’s bloodline. Jun Wu Xie might still be rather young, and on top of that, she was a girl. But just the character “Jun” in her name, was telling Fan Qi undeniably, that she held the authority to

command the Rui Lin Army here!

He had actually intended to downplay the entire matter but Fan Qi could not help it but start to become rather worried now. When even a family member of the Jun Family itself had come all the way here, it was inadvertently telling him that the matter would not be so easily resolved!

All the disciples who were watching intently from behind, had upon hearing Long Qi's words, suddenly found themselves staring wide eyed, at the beautiful and mesmerising girl, who seemed slightly younger than all of them, with surprise in their eyes.

She was obviously so young, but the aura emanating from the girl made people forget her age. Even when she stood among the towering and menacing Rui Lin Army, she did not show a single trace of weakness. Her chilly expression did not allow anyone to disregard her overwhelming presence.

It made her seem as if she had been born, to lead this most ferocious strike force, from the start!

All the disciples were still very much taken by the beautiful young lady and they did not dare defile that perfection in anyway. They lowered down their heads and did not dare to stare so obsequiously at Jun Wu Xie.

“So it's the Young Miss of the esteemed Jun Family, forgive me for my tardiness in coming forward to receive such a distinguished guest.” Fan Qi said with an awkward smile, the shock still gripping his heart.

Jun Wu Xie shot Fan Qi a scathing glance and replied: “There's no need. I am here today to demand justice for our Rui Lin Army. The Zephyr Academy promised to provide to my Rui Lin Army with a satisfactory response. What I would like to know is whether the Headmaster has already expedited an appropriate recourse for the matter?”

Chapter 597: “Seventh Slap (4)”

Get your early access on Patreon now~

To resolve the matter privately?

Sorry, she was not prepared to close the matter in such a quiet manner.

Anybody who dared to lay their grimy paws on the Rui Lin Army, would need to pay for it with their lives!

Fan Qi could not find any words in reply to Jun Wu Xie. He had initially intended to resolve the issue privately and not let word of the incident spread, as if the matter was leaked, it would deal a considerable blow to the reputation of the Zephyr Academy. Unfortunately..... the other party was not giving him any opportunity to do it.

Faced with Jun Wu Xie's aggressive stance, Fan Qi found himself helpless in front of her.

More than a hundred Rui Lin Army soldiers were still lined up before the Zephyr Academy's gates, all of them standing at attention with a hand resting upon the swords hanging from their hips, looking ever ready to pull out those swords and charge in at the first instance that Fan Qi responded in defiance.

Although the Zephyr Academy was extremely famous and enjoyed a high reputation, it was after all still an institution specifically meant for the pursuit of knowledge and learning. In terms of might in battle, they would not be able to stand up to the Rui Lin Army.

Despite having just brought a mere hundred odd Rui Lin Army soldiers, if they wanted to annihilate the Zephyr Academy, it wouldn't be a task too difficult for these battle hardened men.

Cold sweat broke out on Fan Qi's forehead. He really had not expected for a young girl at such a tender age, to be able give out

such a strong oppressive aura onto people.

“Since that is the case..... We will do as Miss Jun wishes.” Fan Qi had no other choice, but to agree to it.

Jun Wu Xie raised an eyebrow, and stared at Fan Qi, who was showing his willingness to shoulder the blame entirely himself, and said: “Then, can I request for the Headmaster to summon all those people who were party to the incident here, and we can clear everything up frankly and openly immediately.”

Fan Qi found himself sweating profusely and he said:

“In regards to the incident, it was due to the Zephyr Academy’s incompetence in our guidance of our disciples, that had caused such an atrocity to occur. Those disciples who played a part in it had immediately been expelled and driven out of the Zephyr Academy after the Spirit Hunt ended.”

“Oh?” Jun Wu Xie’s eyes narrowly dangerously.

“Are you telling me, that Nangong Xu, who was put in charge of the Spirit Hunt has been sacked by you as well?”

Fan Qi was taken aback, and he quickly shook his head.

“Master Nangong did not play a part in it, he was only.....”

Long Qi stepped forward, and his expression darkened before he said: “Our Young Miss’ words were already put across very clearly. If the Headmaster is not sincere in resolving the issue, then the Rui Lin Army will be forced to take things into our own hands.”

When Long Qi finished his statement, the colour on Fan Qi’s face immediately changed.

The meaning behind those words could not be any clearer. If Fan Qi did not summon the people linked to the incident here, Long Qi would lead his men from the Rui Lin Army into the academy and personally “invite’ those people here.

“No..... No need. I will have them brought here.” Fan Qi was on

the verge of tears. Having held the post of Headmaster for such a long time, this was the first time anyone had forced him into a corner like this.

But, in this incident, they were fundamentally at fault, and even if the Rui Lin Army were to really carry out their threat, the Zephyr Academy would not have much grounds to say anything against it.

In moments, Nangong Xu came, having rushed over in a hurry. The moment his eyes picked out the figure of Long Qi, the expression on Nangong Xu's face was suddenly tinged with shame.

"General Long Qi." Nangong Xu greeted Long Qi with a forced smile.

Long Qi completely ignored him but continued looking at Jun Wu Xie to await further instructions.

Jun Wu Xie gestured slightly by raising her hand slightly. Long Qi immediately turned around and glared chillingly at Fan Qi.

"Esteemed Headmaster. You really think the Rui Lin Army would be so easily fooled?"

Fan Qi had almost wanted to kneel down before Long Qi. He genuinely did not know what he had done wrong this time, to have caused Jun Wu Xie to be displeased.

He finally understood now. Long Qi, who was standing before him might be a General of the Rui Lin Army. But within this contingent of soldiers here, the one who really made the decisions was the youngest Jun Wu Xie, and even Long Qi, deferred to Jun Wu Xie's commands.

"May I ask General Long Qi to point me in the right direction? I am truly unable to comprehend what the Young Miss meant." Finding himself so badly cornered by a young lass, Fan Qi was suddenly feeling he had lived in vain.

Chapter 598: “Seventh Slap (5)”

Get your early access on Patreon now~

Long Qi replied stoically: “All persons who took part in the deed, and all who had a part in handling the issue. Would the Headmaster please gather all of these people here?”

Fan Qi finally understood. Being put under great duress to quickly proceed, he dared not negotiate at all and immediately sent people out to locate all the personnels involved.

The crowd which had gathered to see what was going on grew larger and larger. Everyone was drawn to but was kept at arm’s length by Jun Wu Xie’s and Long Qi’s dominating presence. Even the highly revered and esteemed Headmaster, who stood at the pinnacle within the Zephyr Academy was cornered into helpless submission when faced with these two individuals.

Nangong Xu was well known to be stoned faced in the Zephyr Academy, unsmiling and unapproachable, and ordinary disciples usually don’t even have the courage to speak to him.

But now, Nangong Xu was not only smiling, he was positively beaming in fact, falling to a new low, never seen before by any of the disciples!

Witnessing Fan Qi’s and Nangong Xu’s subservient attitudes told the disciples a lot about the Rui Lin Army’s prowess.

Very soon, all the people who were linked to the issue were brought in one after another.

When the Zephyr Academy’s disciples saw the people who were brought here, they were all suddenly shocked.

Among them, not just the teachers who were in charge of safety during the Spirit Hunt were summoned, but even Ning Xin, Yin Yan, Fan Jin and even the Vice Headmaster were brought in together!

What a grand gathering of elites!

“Besides those people who had been expelled, another four disciples from the branch division are currently making their way over here. There is another disciple..... who is not within the academy at the moment.” Fan Qi tried to explain, as he wiped off the sweat from his brow. The person who was missing, was Jun Xie whom Gu Li Sheng had officially accepted just yesterday. But when he had sent people over to locate him, those people had come back with the news that Jun Xie had gotten leave from Gu Li Sheng and was not in the academy today.

Long Qi did not answer Fan Qi immediately but paused and looked at Jun Wu Xie. And after Jun Wu Xie nodded satisfactorily, Long Qi finally turned to Fan Qi and said: “This will do.”

Fan Qi secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

Ning Xin's face was pale, and her eyes were not entirely focused. She allowed herself to be led by Yin Yan, to stand among the group. Looking at the state she was in, it was obvious that she had not yet recovered from the trauma she suffered yesterday and she was still forced to come. Still feeling like her strength had been completely sapped, she raised her eyes to look before her. When her eyes saw the figure of Long Qi, her heart jumped.

The Rui Lin Army really came here!?

Ning Xin subconsciously turned to look at Ning Rui as the fear spread quickly throughout her body. She had thought that the matter would be resolved as her father had planned and she did not expect that she would be brought here.

Ning Rui gave Ning Xin a reassuring gaze and that helped Ning Xin relax a little.

“Se..... Senior Ning..... What..... What should we do now?” Yin Yan was so terrified he felt his legs had turned to jelly.

“What are you afraid of? With my father here, there is nothing to

fear. Lu Wei Jie and the others were already made scapegoats and they had taken the blame. The Rui Lin Army will never take it out on two young juniors like us.”

“But..... but.....”

“There are no buts! The Headmaster is close to my father and he will surely speak up for us. The Rui Lin Army might be powerful, but the Qi Kingdom is still a tiny nation. Do I need to remind you that countless numbers of disciples had studied under my father and the Headmaster and those disciples have moved on to serve many powerful countries throughout the lands. Even if the Rui Lin Army decides to disregard the Zephyr Academy’s reputation, they must at least consider the Headmaster’s and my father’s disciples. It is definitely not to their advantage If they insist on pursuing the issue.” Ning Xin said through narrow eyes, seemingly trying to reassure Yin Yan, but it was more like she was trying to reassure herself.

Ning Xin was actually right in her analysis. Just the Zephyr Academy alone might not count for much, but all the disciples that had once received Fan Qi’s and Ning Rui’s tutelage in the past would now be serving the various mighty powers in every corner of the lands. If their Masters were seen to have been bullied or humiliated, those disciples who had once belonged to the Zephyr Academy would definitely defend their Masters.

Chapter 599: “Seventh Slap (6)”

After hearing Ning Xin’s words, Yin Yan was able to breathe a little better. He carefully supported Ning Xin who was still feeling a little weak, and they stood obediently with the crowd.

“Who is that young lady?” Ning Xin asked, looking at Jun Wu Xie in the distance, standing right beside Long Qi.

Jun Wu Xie’s flawless face with her unmatched beauty immediately stung Ning Xin’s eyes the moment she spotted Jun Wu Xie.

Having always been proud of her own looks, Ning Xin was suddenly feeling rather inferior before Jun Wu Xie.

In terms of both looks and grace, she could not help but feel Jun Wu Xie had the upper hand in both of those areas!

Nevertheless, Yin Yan shook his head. He had never seen Jun Wu Xie before.

“This gentleman here is our Zephyr Academy’s Vice Headmaster, Ning Rui.” Fan Qi introduced Ning Rui with an awkward laugh as he pulled his fellow disciple out from the crowd to come before Jun Wu Xie and Long Qi, where he said to Ning Rui: “And here are our two distinguished visitors. This gentleman here is Long Qi, a general with the Rui Lin Army, and the lady here is the Young Miss of the Lin Palace, Jun Wu Xie.”

Ning Rui was inwardly shocked, and he quickly hid the surprise in his eyes as he greeted the guests.

A distance away, Fan Qi’s formal introduction had caused a particular person’s eyes to widen with alarm.

When Fan Jin received the summons, he had just awoken from his drunken stupor and his mind was still rather groggy and he was still barely conscious as he was being dragged here. Before he could figure out what was really going on, his ears had suddenly heard

the words “the Young Miss of the Lin Palace, Jun Wu Xie”. That had startled him and he raised his head immediately to take a clear look at the young girl beside Long Qi.

It was just one gaze, and Fan Jin found that he could not take his eyes off what he saw.

The sun’s rays were shining upon the unbelievably beautiful girl, its soft slight seemingly enveloping the figure in a warm golden glow. Her long hair was dark as ink, as strands of coloured silk ribbons weaved among those luxurious tassels, falling lightly upon her back. Her skin was snowy white, aglow with a faintly pinkish tinge. On that exquisite little face, he could almost feel the frosty chill, obviously expressing unapproachability, that made people stay away.

That one unintentional peek, made Fan Jin unable to ever erase this mesmerising image from his mind. In the future, even with the long grinding passage of time, he had not able to wipe away this scene he witnessed today, which would stay fresh in his mind.

That was Jun Xie.....

Fan Jin heart shook. The features on that face were completely different, but the chilling frost that showed in those eyes were nevertheless so familiar to him.

He had known that Jun Wu Xie was a girl, but he had never for a moment thought that her real appearance would be so astounding.

He finally understood why the men from the Rui Lin Army had disregarded Ning Rui’s beauteous looks. When before Jun Wu Xie, Ning Xin’s bit of beauty would be just like a withered flower that had fallen to the ground, becoming not even worth mentioning.

Fan Jin stood rooted to the ground, and he could not recover from his shock for a long while.

“Basically everyone who had been involved are already here. We have discussed about the matter and we have taken the necessary

actions. I wonder if this is to Miss Jun's satisfaction?" Fan Qi said carefully, looking anxiously at Jun Wu Xie. The girl was obviously younger than both his sons, but she somehow made Fan Qi extremely tensed.

"Dare I ask, what actions did the distinguished academy take?" Jun Wu Xie asked, completely unmoved.

"Cough..... Together with their leader, Lu Wei Jie, the guilty bunch of disciples have been driven out from the Zephyr Academy and never allowed to return. And I have already stated formally to other academies, and written a scathing critique of their undesirable traits and character. I believe that will teach them a good lesson." Fan Qi reported honestly.

One of Jun Wu Xie's eyebrow raised, and the corners of her mouth hinted of a sneer.

"And that is what the Headmaster deems appropriate?"

Fan Qi gulped, and hesitated a moment before he nodded.

Jun Wu Xie gave out a chilling laugh and said: "Disciples from your distinguished academy attempted to murder our men from the Rui Lin Army and the Cloud Treading Peak. Your distinguished academy promised us then that your disciples would be brought back and properly dealt with, and promised that we would be satisfied with it. But now that the academy has gone back on their word, would you like to take a guess whether I am satisfied?"

Jun Wu Xie's tone when she spoke had always been cold. And now, the chill in her voice was even colder and more intense which made everyone there shudder suddenly.

Chapter 600: “Seventh Slap (7)”

“What did we do that caused you to feel that we have gone back on our word?” Fan Qi wiped at his brow once again that was sweating profusely.

Jun Wu Xie’s frosty eyes swept over the gathered crowd without giving Fan Qi a single word of reply when her gaze suddenly stopped, fixed on a person among the mass of disciples.

“Long Qi.”

“Your subordinate awaits your orders.”

“Go.”

“Yes!”

Long Qi clean and clear voice had barely faded when his towering frame had already whizzed like a whirlwind, and shot himself right into the crowd. A series of surprised shrieks ensued, and quick as lightning, Long Qi grabbed two people from among the disciples and whizzed back to come before Jun Wu Xie once again!

Two wailing cries sounded suddenly. The two people found themselves being carelessly thrown before Jun Wu Xie’s feet, and they started trembling uncontrollably.

The two figures who were thrown like rag dolls onto the ground were in fact Ning Xin and Yin Yan. Never did they for a moment think that they would be picked out by Long Qi himself and thrown into such a humiliating position under the watchful eyes of all the other gathered disciples.

When Ning Rui saw that his daughter was treated in such a manner, his face immediately changed and he stepped up at once.

“Miss Jun, what is the meaning of this?”

Jun Wu Xie’s mouth curled up with a hint of a sneer and said: “What do I mean? Isn’t it just too painfully obvious? The few of

you just decided on your own that by expelling a few disciples, the matter would then be resolved? And you are still blatantly hiding the real mastermind behind this whole plot right here. What? Do you really think that just because our Rui Lin Army is from the faraway Qi Kingdom, you can just brush the whole matter off so easily?”

As she spoke, Jun Wu Xie bent down and grabbed a whole bunch of Ning Xin’s hair and gave a sharp tug as she straightened up.

The sharp searing pain that tore through her scalp made Ning Xin scream and wail pitifully. Yin Yan who was right beside her was crying from fear as he curled up and made himself appear as small as possible, tears and mucus flowing down his face.

“Stop!” Seeing his only daughter mistreated in such a manner by Jun Wu Xie, Ning Rui’s eyes were aflame.

“Stop?” Jun Wu Xie gave out a chilling laugh. “I gave all of you a chance. If all of you had handled the matter fairly and impartially, I would not have pursued the matter. But it is clear that only the accomplices were dealt with and the mastermind behind all of it hidden and concealed, to cover up the truth. Do you need me to remind you? The two culprits ultimately guilty of deliberately luring in a Guardian Grade Spirit Beast in an attempt to murder the members of the Rui Lin Army and the Cloud Treading Peak are these two people still right here. Is this the reply you are giving us?”

Upon hearing Jun Wu Xie’s words, a uproar erupted from the crowd all around them.

Those words that Lu Wei Jie had said when he left had inexorably planted a seed of suspicion in all the disciples’ hearts then, and everything that Jun Wu Xie said today had just reaffirmed Ning Xin’s and Yin Yan’s crimes from suspicions to fact!

Yin Yan and Ning Xin had belonged to the same team as Lu Wei

Jie during the Spirit Hunt. While every single member of that team with the exception of these two, had all been expelled and driven out of the Zephyr Academy, who still remained here, made the circumstances surrounding the matter deeply suspicious.

“Miss Jun must have misunderstood. The matter has nothing to do with these two people. It was all Lu Wei Jie’s doing.” Ning Rui said, trying very hard to suppress the rage welling up within.

Ning Xin’s hands were clasped over her head and trembling like a quail hatching, and she rushed to parrot what Ning Rui said.

“It was Lu Wei Jie! Lu Wei Jie did it all! I have nothing to do with it!”

“Oh?” Jun Wu Xie tugged sharply with her hand. Ning Xin was screaming so badly she could not say another word.

“If I remember it correctly, this lady here is the only daughter of the Zephyr Academy’s Vice Headmaster, am I right? And the other one groveling on the floor there would be her sidekick. The words the Zephyr Academy are telling us might sound very nice and pleasing, but in reality, aren’t you all showing yourselves to be just as capable of abusing your powers and position to protect your personal interests? Nangong Xu, get your sorry self right here this instant!”

Jun Wu Xie demanded loudly in a chilling tone.

Even Nangong Xu was shocked and he hurriedly stepped forward.

“You knew exactly what transpired that day, tell it to your Vice Headmaster, what exactly happened then.” Jun Wu Xie sneered.

Table of Contents

[Genius Doctor: Black Belly Miss](#)

[Synopsis](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Chapter 401: "Spirit Healer \(1\)"](#)

[Chapter 402: "Spirit Healer \(2\)"](#)

[Chapter 403: "Spirit Healer \(3\)"](#)

[Chapter 404: "Spirit Healer \(4\)"](#)

[Chapter 405: "Spirit Healer \(5\)"](#)

[Chapter 406: "Unexpected Twist \(1\)"](#)

[Chapter 407: "Unexpected Twist \(2\)"](#)

[Chapter 408: "Unexpected Twist \(3\)"](#)

[Chapter 409: "Defamation \(1\)"](#)

[Chapter 410: "Defamation \(2\)"](#)

[Chapter 411: "Defamation \(3\)"](#)

[Chapter 412: "Defamation \(4\)"](#)

[Chapter 413: "Defamation \(5\)"](#)

[Chapter 414: "Defamation \(6\)"](#)

[Chapter 415: "Defamation \(7\)"](#)

[Chapter 416: "Defamation \(8\)"](#)

[Chapter 417: "The Fan Brothers \(1\)"](#)

[Chapter 418: "The Fan Brothers \(2\)"](#)

[Chapter 419: "The Fan Brothers \(3\)"](#)

[Chapter 420: "Gu Li Sheng's Rage \(1\)"](#)

[Chapter 421: "Gu Li Sheng's Rage \(2\)"](#)

[Chapter 422: "Beast Spirit Faculty \(1\)"](#)

[Chapter 423: "Beast Spirit Faculty \(2\)"](#)

[Chapter 424: "Beast Spirit Faculty \(3\)"](#)

[Chapter 425: "Trust"](#)

[Chapter 426: "Malady or Poison \(1\)"](#)

[Chapter 427: "Malady or Poison \(2\)"](#)

[Chapter 428: "Malady or Poison \(3\)"](#)

[Chapter 429: "Malady or Poison \(4\)"](#)

[Chapter 430: "Malady or Poison \(5\)"](#)

[Chapter 431: "Malady or Poison \(6\)"](#)

[Chapter 432: "Malady or Poison \(7\)"](#)

[Chapter 433: "A Stubborn Fool \(1\)"](#)

[Chapter 434: "A Stubborn Fool \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 435: "A Stubborn Fool \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 436: "A Stubborn Fool \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 437: "A Stubborn Fool \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 438: "A Stubborn Fool \(6\)"](#)
[Chapter 439: "A Delicious Killer \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 440: "A Delicious Killer \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 441: "A Delicious Killer \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 442: "It's Time \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 443: "It's Time \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 444: "It's Time \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 445: Spirit Hunt \(1\)](#)
[Chapter 446: "Spirit Hunt \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 447: "Spirit Hunt \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 448: "Is That The Weakest or Strongest Team \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 449: "Is That The Weakest or Strongest Team \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 450: "Is That The Weakest or Strongest Team \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 451: "Battle Spirits Forest \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 452: "Battle Spirits Forest \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 453: "Battle Spirits Forest \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 454: "Consecutive Slaps – First Form \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 455: "Consecutive Slaps – First Form \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 456: "Consecutive Slaps – First Form \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 457: "Consecutive Slaps – First Form \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 458: "Consecutive Slaps – First Form \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 459: "Consecutive Slaps – First Form \(6\)"](#)
[Chapter 460: "Consecutive Slaps – First Form \(7\)"](#)
[Chapter 461: "Consecutive Slaps – First Form \(8\)"](#)
[Chapter 462: "Consecutive Slaps – First Form \(9\)"](#)
[Chapter 463: "Being Cute Has Its Perks \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 464: "Being Cute Has Its Perks \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 465: "Being Cute Has Its Perks \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 466: "Being Cute Has Its Perks \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 467: "Consecutive Slaps – Second Form \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 468: "Consecutive Slaps – Second Form \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 469: "Consecutive Slaps – Second Form \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 470: "Consecutive Slaps – Second Form \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 471: "Consecutive Slaps – Second Form \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 472: "Consecutive Slaps – Second Form \(6\)"](#)

[Chapter 473: "Consecutive Slaps – Second Form \(7\)"](#)
[Chapter 474: "Venomous Lady \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 475: "Venomous Lady \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 476: "Venomous Lady \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 477: "Venomous Lady \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 478: "An Opportunist \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 479: "An Opportunist \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 480: "An Opportunist \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 481: "An Opportunist \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 482: "The Most Ferocious Strike Force \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 483: "The Most Ferocious Strike Force \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 484: "The Most Ferocious Strike Force \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 485: "The Most Ferocious Strike Force \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 486: "The Most Ferocious Strike Force \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 487: "Guardian Grade Spirit Beast \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 488: "Guardian Grade Spirit Beast \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 489: "Guardian Grade Spirit Beast \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 490: "Consecutive Slaps – Third Form \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 491: "Consecutive Slaps – Third Form \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 492: "Consecutive Slaps – Third Form \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 493: "Consecutive Slaps – Third Form \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 494: "Consecutive Slaps – Third Form \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 495: "Consecutive Slaps – Third Form \(6\)"](#)
[Chapter 496: "Consecutive Slaps – Third Form \(7\)"](#)
[Chapter 497: "Consecutive Slaps – Third Form \(8\)"](#)
[Chapter 498: "Consecutive Slaps – Homesickness \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 499: "Homesickness \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 500: "Homesickness \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 501: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 502: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 503: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 504: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 505: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 506: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form \(6\)"](#)
[Chapter 507: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form \(7\)"](#)
[Chapter 508: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form \(8\)"](#)
[Chapter 509: "Consecutive Slaps – Fourth Form \(9\)"](#)
[Chapter 510: "The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 511: "The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows \(2\)"](#)

[Chapter 512: "The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 513: "The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 514: "The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 515: "The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows \(6\)"](#)
[Chapter 516: "The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows \(7\)"](#)
[Chapter 517: "The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows \(8\)"](#)
[Chapter 518: "The Relentless Little Tail in the Shadows \(9\)"](#)
[Chapter 519: "The Spirit Hunt Ends \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 520: "The Spirit Hunt Ends \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 521: "The Spirit Hunt Ends \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 522: "The Wind Kicks Up \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 523: "The Wind Kicks Up \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 524: "The Wind Kicks Up \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 525: "The Wind Kicks Up \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 526: "Sudden Affability \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 527: "Sudden Affability \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 528: "Sudden Affability \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 529: "Sudden Affability \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 530: "Planting the Dove in a Magpie's Nest \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 531: "Planting the Dove in a Magpie's Nest \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 532: "Planting the Dove in a Magpie's Nest \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 533: "Seeking Torment, In a Pair \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 534: "Seeking Torment, In a Pair \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 535: "Seeking Torment, In a Pair \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 536: "Seeking Torment, In a Pair \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 537: "Seeking Torment, In a Pair \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 538: "Chan Lin Town \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 539: "Chan Lin Town \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 540: "Chan Lin Town \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 541: "Chan Lin Town \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 542: "Chan Lin Town \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 543: "Chan Lin Town \(6\)"](#)
[Chapter 544: "Mysterious Black Stone \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 545: "Mysterious Black Stone \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 546: "Mysterious Black Stone \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 547: "Mysterious Black Stone \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 548: "Mysterious Black Stone \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 549: "Mysterious Black Stone \(6\)"](#)
[Chapter 550: "Mysterious Black Stone \(7\)"](#)

[Chapter 551: "Mysterious Black Stone \(8\)"](#)
[Chapter 552: "Mysterious Black Stone \(9\)"](#)
[Chapter 553: "Mysterious Black Stone \(10\)"](#)
[Chapter 554: "Heaven's End Cliff \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 555: "Heaven's End Cliff \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 556: "Heaven's End Cliff \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 557: "Heaven's End Cliff \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 558: "Heaven's End Cliff \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 559: "Heaven's End Cliff \(6\)"](#)
[Chapter 560: "Heaven's End Cliff \(7\)"](#)
[Chapter 561: "Heaven's End Cliff \(8\)"](#)
[Chapter 562: "An Auction for the Filthy Rich \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 563: "An Auction for the Filthy Rich \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 564: "An Auction for the Filthy Rich \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 565: "An Auction for the Filthy Rich \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 566: "An Auction for the Filthy Rich \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 567: "An Auction for the Filthy Rich \(6\)"](#)
[Chapter 568: "An Auction for the Filthy Rich \(7\)"](#)
[Chapter 569: "A Killer Youth \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 570: "A Killer Youth \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 571: "A Killer Youth \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 572: "A Killer Youth \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 573: "Murder of a Fellow Disciple \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 574: "Murder of a Fellow Disciple \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 575: "Murder of a Fellow Disciple \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 576: "Murder of a Fellow Disciple \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 577: "Murder of a Fellow Disciple \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 578: "Prep for Slap \(1\)"](#)
[Chapter 579: "Prep for Slap \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 580: "Prep for Slap \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 581: "Prep for Slap \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 582: "Slight Longing"](#)
[Chapter 583: "Mobbed with Slaps"](#)
[Chapter 584: "Mobbed with Slaps \(2\)"](#)
[Chapter 585: "Mobbed with Slaps \(3\)"](#)
[Chapter 586: "Mobbed with Slaps \(4\)"](#)
[Chapter 587: "Mobbed with Slaps \(5\)"](#)
[Chapter 588: "Mobbed with Slaps \(6\)"](#)
[Chapter 589: "Slapping the Mob \(7\)"](#)

[Chapter 590: "Slapping the Mob \(8\)"](#)

[Chapter 591: "Slapping the Mob \(9\)"](#)

[Chapter 592: "Slapping the Mob \(10\)"](#)

[Chapter 593: "Slapping the Mob \(11\)"](#)

[Chapter 594: "Seventh Slap \(1\)"](#)

[Chapter 595: "Seventh Slap \(2\)"](#)

[Chapter 596: "Seventh Slap \(3\)"](#)

[Chapter 597: "Seventh Slap \(4\)"](#)

[Chapter 598: "Seventh Slap \(5\)"](#)

[Chapter 599: "Seventh Slap \(6\)"](#)

[Chapter 600: "Seventh Slap \(7\)"](#)